

How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of
school based assessment (SBA)?

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Abstract

There has long been criticism of the adequacy of end-of-year summative assessment in secondary schools in Bangladesh. As a result of this, formative assessment arrived in this educational assessment landscape in the form of school-based assessment (SBA) in 2006. SBA aspires to incorporate the use of formative assessment to assess many of the important objectives of secondary education, such as solving problems, expressing thoughts clearly in speech, learning to behave appropriately, and developing sound personal and social values. While this relatively new approach has many merits, it is nevertheless the subject of ongoing debates. This study involves exploring SBA from students' perspective using a qualitative research design. It aims to identify students' understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA, the perceived usefulness of SBA and the factors hindering its implementation.

Chapter one: Introduction

Introduction

This qualitative study explores how the newly-introduced assessment system "school based assessment" (SBA), first implemented in Bangladeshi secondary classrooms in 2006, looks in terms of classroom practice and how it is perceived by the students. This chapter provides the background context to SBA being introduced in Bangladesh and describes the nature of SBA. The significance and relevance of the research is discussed and my personal interest and position in relation to SBA as a researcher is shared.

Contextual Background of this Study

Educational assessment system in Bangladesh

There are three stages in the structure of institutional education in Bangladesh. Primary education is a five-year cycle from grade I-V. Secondary education comprises of a three-year junior secondary from grade VI-VIII and a two-year secondary from grade IX- X. Higher secondary education extends from grade XI-XII (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, BANBEIS, 2007). Education has been recognized as a priority sector by all governments since Bangladesh gained independence. Secondary education is one of the most important and biggest sub-sectors in education. The number of secondary schools is 18756, with 209496 teachers and 6819748 students in 2008 (BANBEIS, 2008).

To meet the challenges of the changing world, any developing country needs to ensure quality education. Since the 1990s the government, non-governmental organizations and other educational organizations in Bangladesh have been working to achieve this. Begum & Farooqui (2006), described the nature of the examination system of Bangladesh in their study, "School Based Assessment: Will it Really Change the Education Scenario in Bangladesh?" According to this study, in Bangladesh, the

traditional assessment system is based on final end-of-year examinations. Students sit a Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSC) at the end of year 10 and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of year 12. SSC tests 10 years of education starting from year 1 to 10 and, to test more specific and advanced education of the students, HSC takes place after completion of year 11 and 12. HSC plays a vital role in students' life since it prepares the learners for higher education (Begum & Farooqui, 2006). Reports and decisions about their promotion to the next class level are based only on their performance in the school examinations conducted at the end of each year. Begum & Farooqui (2006) indicated that these examinations test the students' ability to answer written questions in a given time, remembering what they have learned. Thus, these high stake examinations mainly place emphasis on students' memorization skills and their power to reproduce what they know in the examination hall.

Concerns about the traditional assessment system

The existing system of assessment used in Bangladesh has continually been questioned and debates about it have been ongoing. A report ("Policy brief on Education Policy", 2001) argued that "the circus that goes on in the name of public examinations has made Bangladesh a laughing stock of the world"(p.25). The report illustrated that teachers and their professional organizations, the local civil administration, and the parents need to work together to restore the integrity of examinations, and that there is also a need for improving technical and professional competence and skills in the examination bodies such as the Education Boards and the National University. This report also indicated the necessity of bringing about change in the traditional system of assessment. Begum & Farooqui (2006), pointed out that the final end-of-year examination alone cannot assess many of the important objectives of secondary education.

Introducing SBA

The Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) is one of the various improvement projects that have been working at the national level with donor assistance. In 2003 the Project developed SBA system for classes VI–IX under the leadership of the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) Secondary Assessment Unit utilizing newly recruited and trained staff. SBA emphasized the importance of student-centered learning methods and of teachers providing students with regular feedback on their

progress. SBA included development and assessment of a range of student learning outcomes based on different teaching and learning strategies. The strategies included development of (i) intellectual skills that extend beyond simply the recall of knowledge (e.g., understanding, application, analysis, higher-order thinking and problem solving); and (ii) personal and social skills (e.g., values and attitudes, cooperative learning, and social decision making). The Project tested and evaluated the SBA system; after finding it suitable and effective in improving the quality of secondary education they recommended the dissemination of this system nationwide (SESIP, 2008).

In 2005 Ministry of Education (MOE) under the Government of the Peoples of Bangladesh circulated a notice (MOE, 2005) on implementing SBA system for the students of classes VI-IX in all the secondary schools in Bangladesh. According to the circular the aim of the new assessment system was to improve the quality of education through assessing the students using a number of criteria. The notice included instruction on how to score/mark the students under the assessment criteria and semester-based exam. “A Teachers’ Guide for SBA”, by NCTB (2006), stated “SBA VI-IX is being introduced to raise the standards of secondary education to international standards and to ensure overall assessment in respect of the school behavior and personal and social values of students” (p.ii). Begum & Farooqui (2006) also commented “To assess the broader objectives of secondary education (e.g. solving problems, orally expressing thoughts clearly, learning to behave appropriately and developing sound personal and social values) the government of Bangladesh has recently introduced the School Based Assessment (SBA)” (p.47).

Description of SBA

The Government of the Peoples of Bangladesh notice (2005) identified the following criteria as a basis to assess individual students throughout the year in each subject under SBA:

- a. Attendance in class and interest in learning
- b. Assessment (class-wise)
- c. Assignments (individual/in group)

- d. Behavior, values and honesty
- e. Presentation of speech/individual and group discussions
- f. Leadership qualities
- g. Discipline
- h. Participation in cultural activities
- i. Performance in sports and games
- j. Practical classes in science subjects.

According to NCTB (2006), with SBA, student assessment in classes VI-IX will include the following three areas:

1. Students' course work: Includes learning activities under six criteria undertaken by the students both in school and at home.
2. Students' personal development: Includes students' school behavior, social values and participation in co-curricular activities.
3. Students' performance in end-of-year/end -of-semester examinations (p.vi).

Design and Scoring of SBA

Besides describing the areas and criteria of assessment, NCTB (2006) also discussed the assessment processes and the distribution of marks for each subject in every class from VI-IX. The guide instructed that for each subject, out of 100 marks, students' course work (everyday class performance, school behavior and personal and social values) will carry 30 marks, which will be assessed by the subject teacher, and the students' final semester examination will carry the remaining 70 marks (p. iv.). It outlined six criteria (i.e. class test, class work and practical work, home work, assignment, oral presentation and group work) to be scored as course work under SBA. Each criterion holds 5 marks, giving total SBA marks of 30 for six criteria.

This instructional manual also provided a scoring checklist for subject teachers to maintain achievement records for the students under SBA (Appendix-1). In Bangladesh there is a common national curriculum to be followed in all public secondary schools.

Under that curriculum all classes from VI-XII have specific syllabuses for specific subjects. All subject teachers follow their syllabus for each term/semester in an academic year. For SBA, teachers have the freedom to choose the topic from the syllabus and design the class test, class work, practical work, assignment, home work or oral presentation.

Suitability of SBA in Relation to the Socioeconomic Environment and Culture in Bangladesh

SBA is a new approach in Bangladesh. Therefore, there is a possibility that the existing academic culture and socioeconomic environment is maladapted to this new system. Begum & Farooqui (2006) discuss the arguments different scholars make in relation to SBA in Bangladesh. They expressed their concern about the proper implementation of SBA, as sufficient training and support for all secondary school teachers is not yet ensured given the current economic situation of Bangladesh. Asad (2008) expresses his doubt about the proper implementation of SBA in terms of the integrity of the teachers due to the sociocultural environment in Bangladesh.

Why I Am Studying SBA

According to Brown, Irving, and Keegan (2008), almost all societies have national testing. They assert that as long as there is a system to award qualifications to the students, there is national assessment. As assessment can be of a large range of types and for a large range of purposes, there have been and still are ongoing debates about assessment in almost all countries in the world. The nature, purpose and objectives of assessment are changing to meet the emerging needs of contemporary world societies. As assessment is a crucial part of the education system, personnel related to the education sector must have a good understanding of it.

SBA is relatively a new approach in Bangladesh, so there are ongoing debates surrounding it. The acceptability of SBA still has to be resolved, and thus conducting research on the different aspects of SBA is necessary. Despite this necessity, only a small number of studies have been conducted in this field. Begum and Farooqui (2006)

addressed the issue from the perspective of the teachers and NCTB (2006) ran a general discussion on SBA. Asad (2008) expressed his views about SBA in his article, "Unitrack Education System of Bangladesh", by arguing that though the intention of introducing SBA is good in terms of bringing change, the proper implementation of SBA is doubtful as a favorable education environment is not yet ensured in Bangladesh. To explain this doubt he further stated that in this approach the individual teacher has the power to give 30 marks to each student in his/her class. Therefore, there is a question about the honesty and integrity of the teachers in ensuring the fair distribution of marks (Asad, 2008). According to this limited literature that is found on the field of SBA in Bangladesh, different authors have addressed the topic from different perspectives. SBA has been researched from the perspectives of teachers and teacher trainers (Begum and Farooqui, 2006), educationalists (Asad, 2008), and personnel related to education administration (NCTB, 2006). To date, no research has explored the stakeholders' (students' and parents) opinions or attitudes towards SBA. Therefore, it was a necessity to conduct research into students' perspective on the newly introduced assessment system. In this context my research regarding how students perceive the new assessment system is relevant and contributes to the debates surrounding SBA.

Justifying My Position and Interest

Knowing that SBA was introduced to assess the holistic development of the learners, I am keen to know how the learners feel about it. As a teacher educator in Bangladesh, I am used to working in secondary schools and supervising teaching practices in secondary level classrooms. In this context, I have the opportunity to observe the students and I perceived that different students were responding differently when they were being assessed under SBA in their daily classroom activities. Thus I become interested to know about students' views of this assessment system. When going through the studies related to SBA, I found that researchers did not include the stakeholders' (students' and parents') opinions or attitude towards SBA. Thus, as an education professional, it became my moral and professional obligation to listen to and learn from

the students' voice. I was keen both to understand the nature of SBA based on its implementation in everyday classrooms and to know students' experience of this newly implemented assessment system. Therefore, I designed this project in ways which enhanced a great opportunity for me to have close contact with the students in their natural settings and talk to them intimately in a friendly environment.

Another point is that only two studies (i.e. Begum and Farooqui, 2006, and NCTB, 2006) have focused on SBA. Therefore, there is a room for adding to empirical research in this field. This need, and my interest in SBA, sparked my decision to conduct research in this field and to focus my study on exploring the issue from the secondary students' perspective.

Research Questions

By looking at the implementation of SBA in the daily activities of two class-VII classrooms in two different schools and by knowing about students' understanding of SBA, this study explores the following research questions:

1. What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh?
2. What are the students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?

Definition of Terms

Assessment: Assessment is a wide range of methods for evaluating pupil performance and attainment including formal testing and examinations, practical and oral assessment, classroom based assessment carried out by teachers and portfolios (Gipps, 1994, p.vii).

SBA in Secondary schools, Bangladesh: School based assessment. In this approach students' achievements are assessed on their overall performance (solving problems, orally expressing thoughts clearly, learning to behave appropriately and

developing sound personal and social values) throughout an academic year (Begum & Farooqui, 2006).

Secondary schools in Bangladesh: Secondary schools in Bangladesh comprise three-year junior secondary from grade VI-VIII, two-year secondary from grade IX-X, and two-year higher secondary from grade XI-XII.

Secondary students in Bangladesh: The students from grade VI to grade XII are considered secondary students. The usual age range for these students is 11+ years to 18+ years.

Students of grade VII: Students of grade VII in Bangladesh are 12+ years old.

Chapter two: Literature Review

Introduction

To situate a discussion of research on SBA, this chapter considers issues regarding the nature, types and purpose of assessment and their relevance to SBA. Based on the reviewed literature relating to assessment practices and school based assessment, in both Bangladeshi and international contexts, the chapter also includes discussion on student voice in relation to assessment practices in secondary education, the criticisms of assessment and the challenges of bringing changes into assessment practices at national and international levels. To conclude, the chapter highlights the strengths and challenges associated with SBA as revealed in both Bangladesh-based and international literature.

SBA- A Paradigm Shift in Bangladesh

The implementation of SBA in Bangladesh is an important paradigm shift: a shift in emphasis from an approach reliant on summative assessment towards an approach incorporating formative assessment. A longstanding criticism of the end-of-year final summative assessment approach in Bangladesh is that it only assesses the memorization skills of the students and ignores assessment of many of the other important objectives of secondary education (Begum & Farooqui, 2006). These objectives include skills such as solving problems, clearly expressing thoughts orally, learning to behave appropriately and developing sound personal and social values. Therefore, formative assessment is being introduced alongside summative assessment in the secondary level educational assessment landscape in Bangladesh through SBA in order to assess these broader objectives.

Summative assessment takes place at the end of a term or a course and is used to provide information about how much students have learned and how well a course has

worked (Gipps,1994). This assessment is aimed at making an assessment of learning (Earl, 2003) at some endpoint. For example, in Bangladesh summative assessment takes place in the form of the term-final or the year-final examination and the public examinations, such as SSC and HSC examinations where the students' achievements are reported as their performance in all the subjects.

Critics of such traditional tests argue that the test preparation requires drilling students on a narrow set of skills covered on the test which may turn out to be harmful to their educational development and thinking (Crocker, 2005; Hillocks, 2002; Kohn, 2000). Black & William (1998) criticize that children have little opportunity to learn from their mistakes or recognize their strengths and abilities due to the limited feedback summative assessment provides them.

Formative assessment taking place in SBA to help the students' learning is referred to as assessment for learning. To define formative assessment Cowie and Bell (1997) said "the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to students' learning in order to enhance that learning, during learning"(p. 18). Mitchell (2008) says that formative assessment is as much assessment for learning as assessment of learning which evaluates learners' progress during a course or module so that they have opportunity to improve. SBA in Bangladesh secondary schools is a daily classroom based assessment which is based upon the collection of information on students' learning as the course or program goes along (McGee, 1997).

Formative assessment contributes to improving students' learning by helping students to understand their learning better and engaging them in ongoing learning (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshal and William, 2004). When assessment takes place to serve formative purposes the information can be used immediately to plan for the next steps in students' learning (Sutton,1991). Similarly, SBA includes regular class tests as formative assessment so that it can help the students in learning. Thus it was needed to explore how SBA helps students in learning.

Though SBA carries certain marks (30%), it contributes to students' overall grading along with the marks of summative exam (70%). The contribution of formative assessment to students overall grading is focused on in several researchers' comments.

Mitchell (2008) argues that in its pure form, formative assessment does not contribute to the overall grade. Similarly, Gipps (1994) points out that “assessment during the course of a unit or session may be used for summative or grading purposes rather than for truly formative purposes” (p.125). Though the formative approach of SBA has an impact on end-of-year summative assessment, it is not intended to do diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment gives information on children’s strengths and weaknesses and shows the things children can do particularly well and the things they are struggling with (McGee, 1997). This information enables a teacher to plan a program designed to extend strengths and address learning difficulties. This purpose is remedial in practice as it sets out to determine children’s strengths and weaknesses and place them into appropriate learning programs specifically tailored to meet their learning needs (Black and William, 1998).

The notion and context of paradigm shifts in the educational assessment arena are also discussed in the international assessment literature. The change in assessment practice as SBA in Bangladesh is similar to the notion of paradigm change used by Gipps (1994) as she states “Assessment is undergoing a paradigm shift, from psychometrics to a broader model of educational assessment, from a testing and examination culture to an assessment culture”(p1).

International studies also focused on the context of introducing shifts in assessment practices. Brown, Irving and Keegan’s (2008) study points out that, with the establishment of the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) in the early 1990s, it was decided to develop a new qualification system as the previous system had been publicly questioned. Thus NZQA began developing what they now call a standards-based qualification. In his study on educational assessment in New Zealand schools, Crooks (2002) asserted that within 15 years the formal assessment in New Zealand schools has been changed from the norm-referenced approach to criterion-referenced approach or 'Standards-based assessment'. Turnock (2009), focused on the theoretical and policy framework that reflected the shift toward teachers being encouraged to adopt changes in assessment practices in an early-childhood setting. The findings of her case study describe how a group of early childhood teachers shifted their assessment practices more towards formative than summative and diagnostic assessment. As these studies view the

assessment changes from a developed country's perspective, there is a room for viewing the changes from other perspectives. Thus, my study focuses the issue from a developing country's viewpoint.

How SBA Relates to Assessment Approaches

In Bangladesh SBA appeared as a form of national testing. National testing is the assessment which is implemented nationally to award qualifications to the students. To assess the students' performance it adopted the use of a number of activities rather than assessing students only on their memorization skills (Begum & Farooqui, 2006). Activities include group work, oral presentation, classroom performance, doing assignments individually and studying at home regularly, which are new to Bangladeshi students (NCTB, 2006). Such assessment of students' performances can be compared to the assessments described by other researchers. Gipps (1994) defines assessment as a wide range of methods that evaluate the performance of students through different types of evaluative activities. Under SBA students are given certain marks based on the evaluation of their performance. According to McGee (1997) assessment is an activity that involves gathering of information and making judgments out of it and thus assigning a grade, marks or some other categorization. As NCTB (2006) describes, in SBA teachers are obtaining evidence of students' performance through different activities and are giving them a score or mark as well as providing them with feedback. New Zealand's policy document for schools on evaluation defines assessment as '1. The process of obtaining evidence of students' achievement or competence; and 2. The act of interpreting or describing students' achievement' (Assessment: Policy to practice, 1994, p. 47). To describe the nature of assessment, Baker & Linn (1997) pointed out that tests were used to monitor the quality of school systems, evaluate education policies and programs, make important instructional decisions about students, and leverage major educational change (Baker & Linn, 1997). On the other hand, Mitchell (2008) describes educational assessment by highlighting its characteristics which are increasingly being seen as serving educational purposes by promoting learning and by guiding teaching. Madhus and Kellaghan (1992) define assessment as an activity designed to show what a person knows or can do. Similarly, in Bangladesh students are taking part in some

assessment activities everyday under SBA, which helps the teachers to evaluate and make a decision about assessment instructions. Thus SBA is expected to be seen as a guide to the secondary teachers in order to help students' learning (NCTB, 2006).

SBA in Bangladesh consists of external and internal assessment. Both affect the overall grade of a student and thus have a significant impact on awarding qualification or certification to the pupils.

Internal and external assessments are related to policies that are internal or external to the school (James, 1998). For example, diagnosis, feedback to students and teachers and individual target-setting are purposes internal to the school, whilst certification, selection, monitoring standards, evaluation of school performance and accountability relate to policies that are largely external to the school (James, 1998). New Zealand's criterion-referenced approach or 'Standards-based assessment' is also a mixture of internal and external assessment, as Brown, Irving and Keegan (2008) point out that in this system, standards are assessed either internally by the student's teacher/school or externally examined in an end-of year examination.

SBA adopts a criterion-referenced assessment to identify the quality of students' performances and score those performances against standards. Six standards or criteria have been determined to assess students' performance. The standards express a recognizable degree of progress or quality within a domain in skill, knowledge or understanding. According to NCTB (2006) the criteria are:

- Class tests: Class tests are written exams that usually take place on completion of each lesson, chapter, or unit of the textbook. Students are required to answer here without any help from their teacher or peers.
- Class work: Class work refers to the work done in the classroom such as listening, reading, writing, drawing or thinking.
- Home work: Home work is the textbook based coursework that the teacher instructs the students to do at home individually.
- Assignments: These are large-scale pieces of homework where the students are required to explore information from other sources beyond their text book to develop advanced knowledge.

- Oral presentation: Here the students are expected to develop their communication skill by expressing themselves orally in front of the class.
- Group work: Under this criterion students' performance in working collaboratively, respecting others' views and developing leadership skills are assessed.

Each of the criteria holds 5 marks and thus 30 in total in each subject. Students are required to fulfill the requirements of each criterion to get the SBA marks. This aspect of SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh is similar to the criterion-referenced assessment or standards-based assessment of New Zealand. In 2004, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) completed its implementation of a criterion-referenced approach which is known as standards-based assessment, with the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) as the main qualification for secondary students (Rawlins et al., 2005). Brown et al., (2008) describe that standards-based qualifications identify the quality and quantity of students' actual achievement and rate those performances against standards. Therefore, Barrington, 2004; Hipkins & Vaughan (2004), argue that assessment in New Zealand is no longer about students competing against one another, but about achieving to a set standard and thus students are becoming more empowered and are increasing in confidence (as cited in Rawlins et al., 2005). Like New Zealand's criterion-referenced assessment, SBA also differs from norm-referenced assessment.

Norm-referenced assessment is based on comparisons between the achievements of one student with that of other students when using the same measurement (McGee, 1997). The information gathered from these comparisons identifies if children are above average, below average or about the same as other children at a similar age or stage.

On the other hand, criterion-referenced assessment does not require comparisons between the performances of a student and other students; rather the performance of a student is compared to a standard or criterion that have been established for that particular purpose (Sutton 1991 and McGee, 1997). SBA in Bangladesh is also based on a similar concept. Therefore, NCTB (2006) says "SBA VI-IX is being introduced to raise the standards of secondary education to international standards"(p.ii).

To describe the benefits of SBA in Bangladesh NCTB (2006) argues that SBA is introduced to ensure overall assessment in respect of the school behavior and personal and social values of a student. International studies also looked at the benefits of standards-based assessment in regards to students' personal development and learning. In 2005 NZQA was conducting ongoing research into assessment practices in the senior secondary school through the study "Standards-Based Assessment in the senior secondary school: A Review of the Literature". The research team reviewed international and national literature to gather data. It is found within the literature that currently, assessment in New Zealand discourages competition among the students and encourages the achievement of set standards and so students are becoming more empowered by this system and are increasing in confidence (Barrington, Hipkins and Vaughan as cited in Rawlins et al., 2005). Black and William (1998) argue that standards-based reform and its implied pedagogical changes have a positive impact on student learning achievement.

Though SBA in Bangladesh has many merits vocal critics are found who doubt its true implementation in the socioeconomic context of Bangladesh. Findings revealed from interviewing a number of secondary teachers in Begum and Farooqui (2006)'s study are that SBA imposes extra workload on the teachers to maintain all the categories of activities under SBA. It is also revealed from their study that the teachers were doubtful of completing the syllabus if they tried to do all the activities in the overpopulated class rooms. Such types of criticisms about the limitation of standards-based assessment in New Zealand are also found in their analysis, as Lee, Sizmur and Sainsbury (as cited in Rawlins et al., 2005) identify issues of proliferation, atomization and specificity in standards-based assessment as resulting in manageability and workload problems for teachers. Others consider that it is time-consuming in absolute terms, for both candidates and assessor, and it imposes major costs in terms of equipment, provision of wide-ranging assessment situations, and repeated evidence of mastery (Gilmore, Linn & Herman, Wolf, as cited in Rawlins et al., 2005). Brown et al., (2008) revealed a long standing criticism of the standards-based assessment system is that it lends itself to a fragmentation of subjects. They also pointed out that teachers now complain about the work involved in conducting school-based, internal assessment. My study aims to

contribute to such criticism of criterion-referenced/standards-based assessment by looking at the role of teachers in implementing SBA in the everyday classroom.

Purposes of SBA

SBA aspires to assess students' holistic development through formative assessment during daily classroom activities in Bangladesh as well contributing to the overall grading of summative assessment (NCTB, 2006). Educational assessment meets several different purposes, including providing feedback to external agencies, parents and children, identifying children's strengths and weaknesses and monitoring children's learning and development (McGee, 1997). During the last decades the assessment system in Bangladesh mainly depended on summative assessment which was insufficient for the purpose of assessing the holistic development of the learners (Begum and Farooqui, 2006; Asad, 2008; and Policy brief on education policy, 2001). Therefore, to make the assessment more purposeful, Bangladesh started practicing formative assessment along with summative assessment which is known as SBA. The purpose of SBA is described by Gonzales (2009): he says that school-based assessment (SBA) is an assessment carried out in schools by pupils' own teachers, with the prime purpose of improving pupils' learning. He also points out that the purpose of SBA is to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Based on the findings of his study on school-based Assessment in Sri Lanka, he argues that SBA should serve both formative and diagnostic purposes.

There is a considerable debate about the purposes of different assessment approaches in the literature. That is, of formative, summative and evaluative assessment, which should take priority? Some argue that public confidence in the system of assessment is vital and therefore the evaluation and accountability aspect is the most important (Hall, Winch & Gingell, as cited in Rawlins et al. 2005). Others critique the prevalence of assessment for accountability as it leads to 'teaching to' and 'learning for' the test (Boss et al & William, as cited in Rawlins et al., 2005). Black & William (1998) explored the purposes of formative assessment by conducting an extensive survey of relevant research literature. Based on the findings of their study, Black & William argue

that there is evidence that formative assessment is a key feature of classroom work that can lead to significant improvement in student learning and raising standards (Black & William, 1998; p.19). Gipps (1994) states that formative assessment contributes directly to progress in learning also indirectly through its effect on pupils' academic self esteem. Similarly Begum & Farooqui (2006) express their views about the purpose of assessment differently as they consider that in the education process it is often required to assess the progress of the learners, how changes in the education system have impacted the learners, and how these changes have been organized. Thus this study intends to explore the application of the formative approach of SBA in the classroom reality in Bangladesh.

School Based Assessment (SBA) in the International Context

School based assessment is also implemented in other Asian countries. In 1999, an SBA Programme was implemented in Sri Lanka at a national level in Grade 6 and Grade 9, under the Education Reform Programme (Gonzales, 2009). In his study of SBA he analyzed the documents that were presented and distributed at an educational consultants' conference at the National Education Institute (NIE), Sri Lanka. This study outlined the characteristics of SBA as a transparent assessment system which uses diverse assessment approaches and promotes competency-oriented teaching and learning within a teacher-friendly environment.

Berry (2006) describes that a much wider use of SBA has recently been added to the assessment system in Hong Kong as one important aspect of their assessment reform. She used document analysis to gather information for this study. Findings of the research revealed that school-based assessment (SBA) can bring about many educational benefits. Ideally, it helps reduce examination pressure and helps improve teaching and learning.

The discussion about SBA in an international context enriched my understanding, which helped me to construct a comparative overview between SBA in different countries. This is useful for me to develop insight into what purposes SBA may serve in Bangladesh's context.

Strengths of SBA, and Challenges of Implementing it in Both International and Bangladeshi Contexts

Some remarkable strengths of and challenges to implementing SBA in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have been found in the literature, as well as criticisms thereof.

Gonzales (2009) found that in Sri Lanka SBA was,

- being implemented satisfactorily in the majority of schools
- growing in popularity among teachers and pupils
- causing teachers to pay more attention to planning assessment tasks than before SBA was implemented.
- enabling pupils to pay more attention to skills development, due to the high recognition given for skills in SBA
- resulting in immediate feedback to pupils as assessment results were readily available to them.

According to this study in Sri Lanka, the challenges to implement SBA more successfully are developing suitable mechanisms to moderate raw SBA marks prior to integrating with external exams marks, training up the National Testing and Examinations Service officers on SBA moderation practices, and making SBA Grades acceptable to the employer, community, and general public.

Begum & Farooqui (2006), explored the teachers' and SBA trainers' opinions and the current situation of SBA in Bangladesh through interview. The findings showed that trainers were very optimistic about changing the assessment system successfully. The teachers were divided in their opinions regarding the positive impact of the SBA system on the current education system. The findings showed that although the government has already implemented the new assessment system, most of the teachers have not got the training necessary for implementing such a project. The study foresaw that untrained teachers would have a poor understanding of the ideas which would lead to their being unable to distribute the marks effectively. Thus it was predicted that if those teachers tried to implement such a new system, it might not be implemented properly as it is intended. Teachers' comments about the difficulty they faced due to the time constraints

on doing all the activities under SBA within the sociocultural context of Bangladesh made the researcher consider SBA as an extra burden for the teachers. Thus the researchers suggested that if the SBA is implemented without providing adequate training and other support to the teachers, there would be every possibility of the creation of a huge gap between ministerial vision and classroom reality. The participant teachers of Begum & Farooqui (2006)'s study considered that it was important to implement policies that suit the local culture and socioeconomic perspectives. The findings indicated that the success of the new assessment system greatly depends on whether or not the teachers feel that the policy is well suited for the local culture, whether they have enough time, knowledge, and adequate support to achieve the goals and whether they receive the training and encouragement to bring about the change.

The national and international literature about SBA outlines the challenges, pitfalls to avoid, and experiences to take into account when implementing it as a new assessment system. Therefore, this discussion helped me to consider SBA in secondary classrooms in relation to these practical issues, and exploring them from students' points of view.

Research into Students' Perception of Secondary Education and Assessment

As this study explores students' views regarding school based assessment in Bangladesh, it was necessary for me to look at how other researchers have explored students' view on aspects of education. I found that research into students' perception has taken several approaches. For example, Kane, Maw and Chimwayange's (2006) study of making sense of learning at secondary school by teachers and students used secondary classrooms as an authentic context to explore learning process in secondary schools. Adopting a questionnaire survey and student-teacher focus group interview, individual interviews and document analysis as data collection methods, this study used the voices of students and teachers to address the research questions. Studying how they have used their methods, I realized that due to the qualitative nature of my study, with only students as participants, a survey or focus group would not be suitable for my study. But the types of question they used in recall interviews with students helped me to understand about what language should be used when interviewing students.

Joong, Ying, Lin and Jian (2006) in their study explored the voices of students, parents, and teachers regarding educational reform in China. They examined how and to what extent secondary teachers have implemented educational reforms in China that have had a direct impact on students, teachers, and parents. Their ethnographic approach involved questionnaire surveys and classroom observation. Though major sources of data for this study were surveys, they used classroom observation to explore the teaching and assessment strategies of the newly implemented educational reform. Their usage of participant observation is very similar to my study's approach, and thus is helpful for me to gain insight into how to use the method for exploring SBA.

Within the literature the researchers have explored and investigated various issues related to school based assessment and other assessment issues such as purpose, types, usefulness and limitations of assessment, or changes in assessment practices from different perspectives such as teachers' perspectives, students' perspectives, education specialists' or trainers' perspectives, and researchers' perspectives. Research into assessment has taken several methodological approaches like qualitative or quantitative and different types of methods such as, questionnaire survey, document analysis, interview, literature review, and observation etc., which were well suited for the respective studies.

My study explores the nature of SBA in practical terms and students' views on it. Reviewing the literature, I was able to locate the factors or issues that I could explore regarding SBA and was also able to isolate approaches to understanding the phenomena of my study that were likely to be suitable.

Chapter-Three: Methodology

Introduction

To study how secondary students in two schools in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment, I undertook a qualitative interpretive study. This chapter begins by discussing the theoretical framework of the study and my research position. The chapter then describes the methods and procedures I used in the study as I explored the nature of SBA in classroom reality and students views on it.

Davidson and Tolich (2003) write that “all research begins with some kind of curiosity” (p. 90). This was the case for me as I found myself curious when I talked to a number of secondary students about SBA. When I was doing my observational assessments of trainee teachers in the secondary classroom, I observed that students were responding differently to this newly implemented assessment system. I then became interested and started discussing SBA with some students to hear their perspectives. I found that there was difference in their opinions and I decided to explore the issue further.

Theoretical Framework and Methods of Inquiry

Social Constructivism

This study is qualitative in nature and underpinned by social constructivist theory. To explain the underpinning theory of the study, here I would like to refer to Harris (2009), as he points out that constructivist theories focus on lived experience and the perceptions, feelings and understandings of the people in these experiences (Schwandt, 1994 as cited in Harris, 2009), and social constructivists are interested in the construction of knowledge through the social group (Harris, 2009). Derry (1999) and McMahon (1997) argue that social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding

what occurs in society and constructs knowledge based on this understanding. To address the purpose of my study, I was guided by social constructivist theory when I observed the activities of teachers and students in the classroom and thus explored issues regarding SBA. My knowledge about SBA was constructed through the activities and understanding of a group of students and their teachers in class VII when they were practicing and shaping SBA in the classroom.

Interpretive Paradigm

‘A paradigm is an interpretive framework or a set of beliefs that guide action. This paradigm refers to the focus of research and related ways of approaching inquiry’ (Reyes, 2002, p.1). The central endeavor of the interpretive paradigm in qualitative research is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Denzin and Lincon (2003) outlined four major interpretive paradigms which structure qualitative research as ‘positivist and post positivist’, ‘constructivist-interpretive’, ‘critical (Marxist, emancipator)’ and ‘feminist-postcultural’. They argue “the constructivist-interpretive paradigm assumes relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings) and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures”(p.35). Cohen, Manion and Morison (2001) point out that to maintain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. Due to the nature and purpose of this study I have chosen to place the research within a constructivist- interpretive framework to understand the views of secondary students about their new assessment system through their in-depth understandings of the phenomena.

Case Study:

In keeping with its interpretive and social constructivist framework this study adopted a qualitative case-study methodology involving six students from two schools (three from each). It is focused on understanding the experiences of students in relation to

SBA. According to Cohen, Manion and Morison (2001), case study has an interpretive paradigm and it provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand more clearly the issues explored, rather than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. A qualitative case study approach enables the in-depth exploration of the experience of the participants in the research, where the intention is to explore in depth the lived experiences of the participants rather than to generalize to a population (Mutch, 2005; Stake, 1994), and case study design facilitates such exploration.

As Stake (2005) says a qualitative case study is characterized by researchers spending extended time on site, personally in contact with activities and operation of the case, reflecting and revising descriptions and meanings of what is going on. In this study I explored the experiences of six students and two of their teachers based on their daily teaching / learning activities in the classroom. The intrinsic and interpretive designs of the case study approach aim to develop what is perceived to be the case's own issues, contexts and interpretations. Thus, I undertook participant observation as a method in the setting to gain an understanding of how knowledge about SBA is being developed by the shared meaning of the students and teachers. To gain a further in-depth understanding I conducted semi-structured interviews with the students. Using a very informal setting the students were asked to answer questions about their experience of SBA. Questions included probing and linking questions to explore the issue in-depth. Therefore, the use of data collection methods such as participant observation and interview indicate the interpretive nature of this study.

Participant observation

This study was aimed at understanding the practice of SBA in real classroom situations. To maintain the social constructive underpinnings of the project one of the main data collecting tools was participant observation. Cohen, Manion and Morison (2001), consider participant observation as the best method to assist the researcher to do the task of explaining the means by which an orderly social world is established and maintained in terms of its shared meaning. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), 'participant observation allows the researcher to enter the world of the people he or she plans to

study, to get to know them and earn their trust, and to systematically keep a detailed written record of what is heard and observed' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p.2). Several recent studies used participant observations to investigate educational issues (Belcher, 2006, Joong et al., 2005, Wilmot, 2003). Belcher's (2006) study about parents and children's views on numeracy as they transitioned to school used participant observation to gather descriptive data that valued the views, perspectives, opinions and beliefs of the participants. I also wanted to explore similar phenomena in the context of students' understanding of SBA in Bangladesh. In Joong et al., 2006's study, to hear the voices of students, teachers and parents on an educational reform relating to the teacher's role, participant observation was used along with questionnaire administration. To examine how and to what extent secondary teachers have implemented educational reforms in China, classroom observations were carried out on the curriculum material, teaching, learning and assessment strategies used in their study. I also intended to observe how the teaching and learning activities and assessment strategies were undertaken by students and teachers under SBA in the classrooms. Therefore, this method was appropriate for me to develop a clear understanding of the issues. Wilmot (2003) did participant observation in his study of investigating a new assessment policy. In this study his role was as an insider researcher, which enhanced opportunities for him to remain in the setting for a longer period and look into the barriers of the implementation of that policy practically. Bell (2009) suggested that in conducting participant observation the researcher has to be accepted by the individuals or groups being studied and this can mean doing the same job or living in the same environment and circumstances as the subjects for lengthy periods. Though I was not a part of the context like Wilmot (2003), I lived there for quite a long period and thus was cordially accepted by the participants.

I was able to keep a very congenial atmosphere in the classrooms so that the situation did not seem to be an artificial or threatening one. It was a great opportunity for me to observe the students in their natural settings. I observed that the students of class VII of both schools were participating in their daily activities spontaneously and freely. Activities included following the teacher's instructions, answering the teacher's questions, examining something practically, writing on the black board, dividing into groups to do group work, discussion within groups to solve problems, synthesizing

information, presenting the group work in front of the class etc. I observed that the teachers were paying attention to the activities of particular students to score their performance. As I was sitting in the classrooms, I was also able to observe how attentively the students were listening to the teachers, how they were responding, and how willingly they were engaging themselves in group discussion, problem solving and in presentation. Though I was observing the whole class, my attention was especially focused on the three students who were nominated as the participants of the study. My intensive observations allowed me to value the views, perspectives, opinions and beliefs of those particular students and to take notes. This also enabled me to develop knowledge about how the teachers and students were shaping SBA based on their understanding of it. Thus, this method was well suited for me to understand how the aspects of SBA are being constructed in a social context by a social group. Based on my understandings I drew a true picture of the implementation of SBA in my detailed field notes and thought about the type and topic of the question to be asked at the interview sessions. In this way, from each observation, I was able to make interview guides for the interviews. My knowledge about SBA therefore was constructed from the classroom, which was an aim of the study.

Semi-structured interview

In keeping with the project's interpretive underpinning, the other main data collecting tool was a semi-structured interview. Cohen, Manion and Morison (2001), suggested that in the interpretive paradigm case studies tend to use certain data collection methods, for instance, semi-structured interviews and document analysis rather than other methods such as surveys or experiments. Mutch (2005) considers that semi-structured interviews usually have sets of key questions that are followed in a more open-ended manner and interview guides that list broader topics or questions to be covered compared with structured interviews. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews also offers the qualitative researcher the advantage of being able to modify their line of inquiry, to follow up interesting responses and to investigate underlying motives, enabling a more in-depth understanding. A number of educational researchers have used the semi-structured interview as a method in their studies. Such studies include Fastier (2006), Belcher (2006) and Begum and Farooqui (2006). Fastier's (2006) study of teachers'

perceptions of geography achievement standards within the New Zealand senior secondary school context employed semi-structured interview as a means of data collection. Fastier suggests semi-structured interview enhanced the opportunity for him to use probes when he considered it necessary to gain further elaboration of, or clarification of, responses of the interviewees to any of his questions. The method was very useful for him to gain in-depth understanding of the interviewee's perception. As I wanted to gain in-depth understandings of children's views of SBA in Bangladesh, the method was suited to my project as well.

In their study of SBA in Bangladesh, Begum and Farooqui (2006) used semi-structured interviews along with questionnaire surveys. The interview served the purpose of exploring further the teachers' opinion and the current situation of SBA. Most of the questions focused on participants' understanding of SBA and their attitude towards it. All the questions of the interview emerged from the questionnaire survey where there was no scope to apply researcher's perception and insight. I also explored the same phenomena from students' perspectives. I used semi-structured interviews following participant observations where the questions of my interview emerged from my observation of the context. Belcher (2006) also used semi-structured interviews with participants where this method fulfilled her purpose of exploring their explanation of their role at the point of children's transitioning to school. The interview guide or list of prompts encouraged a variety of responses which relied on her interviewing skills to probe for elaboration of comments. Similarly, when interviewing the students I also used probing questions to get further elaboration of some of their comments.

I developed an interview schedule around the following areas:

- i) *The nature of SBA.* This included students' understanding of the meaning of SBA both as a term and as a system.
- ii) *The major criteria of assessment under SBA.* This area included students' opinions on whether they are well informed about the specific criteria on which SBA is based.
- iii) *Students' feeling about SBA.* This included students' attitude towards and feeling about being assessed under different criteria of SBA.

iv) *Assessment process*. This area included students' responses about their understanding of the assessment procedures and scoring of SBA.

v) *The impact of SBA on students' learning*. This area included students' perceptions on how SBA plays a role in their learning.

vi) *The role of teachers*. This area includes students' views about their teachers' role in SBA during the daily classroom activities.

vii) *Students' role*. Included students understanding of what they are expected to practice, perform, or do in this assessment system and why.

viii) *The advantages/disadvantages of SBA*. Included students' response on their feelings about the positive/negative impact of SBA on their overall development.

ix) *The barriers of implementing SBA in the daily classrooms*. This area included students' views about the factors which they considered as barriers to proper implementation of SBA in their daily classroom.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the interviewee's perception regarding each area probes were used when considered necessary to gain further elaboration and / or seek clarification of the responses made.

My Position

Researcher positioning is an important consideration in qualitative case study. The researcher's active participation in the study, and close association with the setting, is influential in their positioning. Initially, I gave attention to build up a friendly relationship with the teachers whose classes I intended to observe and also I wanted to establish my identity and role as a researcher. I did so as a step to enable me to create an impression within the secondary school setting. As I was an outside researcher, I also felt it necessary to gain their confidence in me. This suggests it is unlikely that I could become disconnected or isolated from the research context. Coffey (1999) adds that these

identities or roles “can adapt and change; can be singular or multiple” (p. 24). At first, I was introduced to the teachers as a teacher educator under the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. They started regarding me as an instructor or as one of ministry people. I felt that this impression could disturb the natural and spontaneous behavior of the teachers in front of me. I then took on the additional roles of being a researcher and a student under the University of Canterbury. Before starting data gathering, I went to the teachers’ common rooms at the schools several times and had open discussion with the teachers on various issues related to mine and their experience of assessment in both national and international contexts. I also was introduced to those students who were nominated as the participants of the study and talked in a very cordial manner in their leisure periods. In effect these new roles worked to establish a friendly environment conducive to effective research. I was aware of the concept of power relations so I carefully tried to be open and responsive to any possibilities that may arise. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) discuss the qualitative characteristics of relationships with participants during the research process. It is common for the qualitative researcher to have intense contact with the participants and multiple roles within the field (Hammersley, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). As an outside researcher it was important that I focused on establishing a researcher’s role with the participants rather than a teacher educator’s role. Considering the students’ and teachers’ comfort, values and knowledge levels when exploring their understandings enhanced their ability to have confidence in me.

Procedure

Gaining access and consent

On 19th October ’10, I went to one school to become familiar with the setting. After introducing myself, I explained my research topic to the principal of the school. The principal welcomed me cordially and showed his interest in the research. As the first step, I delivered the information sheet and consent form to him (see Appendix 6 and 10). On the next day I got the forms back with his signature. I then asked him to nominate a class-VII teacher whose class I could observe. One male class teacher of class VII was

nominated and I provided him with the information sheet and consent form (see Appendix 7 and 11).

Participant recruitment

After getting the class teacher's consent (Appendix 11), I asked him to nominate 5 students whom I could interview for the study. Then I provided information letters (see Appendix 8 and 9) that outlined the purposes of the research, participation requirements, ethical issues and consent forms (see Appendix 12 and 13) for three of the nominated students and their parents. The information letters and consent forms were written in both Bengali and English. I had a plan that if all selected students, and their parents, consented to participate, the recruitment of participants would cease at that point. If however, some did not choose to participate, I would then select the next student on the list and invited their participation. I planned to repeat the process until the participation of six students (three for each case study classroom) was confirmed. Fortunately, the first three students and their parents happily gave consent to participate. I got the consent forms back with their signatures on 25th October and I finally recruited them. They were two girls and one boy. I gave a pseudonym to each student to ensure independence and confidentiality.

I entered the second school on 1st November, 2010. I followed similar steps just like the first school to gain access to the setting, gain consent and to recruit participants. The participants at that school were two boys and one girl.

Organizing schedule for data gathering

I planned to observe three English language classes in the first school and talked to the principal, the teacher and the students to make a schedule for three participant observations and three interview sessions over the period 21st October to 9th November'10.

Similarly, I made a schedule to observe three science classes in the second school operated by the class teacher over the period 9th November to 7th December'10.

The Setting

This study was conducted at two secondary schools in Bogra district in Bangladesh. Both schools have double shifts, open from 7.45am to 12.00 am and 12.15

pm to 5.00pm. The schools have 5 classes from class VI to Class X. There were two sections for each class. In one school there were 100+ students in each section. In another school the class size was 50+ in each section. The students were aged between 11+ to 16+ years of age for classes VI to X. I observed Class VII, section A in one school and section B in another, where the students were 12+ yrs old. The classes I observed were a science class in one school and an English language class in the other school. The subject teachers of both classes obtained a Master's degree in their respective subjects. They also obtained B. Ed training and in-service training on SBA.

Data Gathering

I did six observations in two schools, which meant three observations in the same class in each school. Prior to the observations I was able to develop a friendly relationship with the participant students and their class teacher. The duration of each session was 30 minutes and I observed the session for the whole time. I took notes of all the activities of the students and the teacher during the session. When back home, based on the notes, I wrote detailed field notes on each of my observations. On the next day, I started thinking about the interview questions and then designed the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with the students.

Each observation was followed by a semi-structured interview with one participant. To conduct each semi-structured interview I started with a personal introduction, such as stating my name and occupation, and then asked about the participant's personal information. After that I assured them verbally about the confidentiality of the interview. Though permission to have the interviews audio recorded was sought previously through consent forms, as double-checking, I gained oral permission again from each participant before recording their voice. I then started asking questions following the interview guide. The duration of each interview was of 30/ 30+ minutes. After checking that all the aspects of SBA in the interview guide which I intended to explore were covered by the answers of each interviewee, I ended each interview by giving thanks and wishing them all the best.

In this way I conducted six interviews with six students to explore their views of SBA. When completed, I transcribed the tape soon after each interview. For ethical reasons information identifying the participants was changed or excluded from the interview transcripts and the audiotapes wiped. As the interviews were conducted in our local language, Bangla, I transcribed them in Bangla first and then translated them into English. The translation was peer reviewed by one Bangladeshi postgraduate student, and edited for fluency by a native speaker.

Data Analysis

I began data analysis by quality assurance through member checking and peer checking.

Member checking

After completion of all field note writing and transcribing, I sent the field notes and interview transcripts to the respective participants for member checking. This allowed them to check if there was any misinterpretation or fabrication of the original information. Through the member checking I was able to provide the participants with an opportunity to ensure their responses were fairly recorded and reflected a true representation of their understandings. These strategies enhanced the credibility of my research. I also invited them to comment, and was ready to make changes to the scripts duly according to their comments. However, nobody suggested that I needed to make any changes in any of the information that I included on the scripts.

Peer checking

After getting the field notes and interview transcripts back from member checking, I translated them in English. I felt that after translating the data into English the language became more formal and in places appeared more like teachers' speech than students' speech. I then recruited one Bangladeshi post graduate student for the peer checking of

the translation. He went through all the Bangla transcripts and their English translation copies to check whether the meaning of the translated sentences were the same as the original ones. He made few changes to some sentences and thus it was helpful for me in maintaining a high quality of data.

Organizing the data

With over 40 pages of interview transcriptions and 30 pages of field notes I had reached saturation point when member checking and peer checking was completed. I made several copies of each interview transcript and field note. I checked the interview scripts for accuracy and made small changes to ensure flow and coherency. Each transcript and field note was then double-spaced, lined and paginated to assist with locating text. In qualitative research data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and are not carried out at a specific time or stage of the research (Delamont, 2002; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Wolcott, 1995). Bogdan and Biklen, (2003) describe data analysis as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials” (p.147). This process allowed me to

- work with the data,
- organize the data ,
- break the data into manageable units (primary codes/key words),
- code the keywords,
- synthesize the coding (producing concepts),
- and search for patterns (themes). (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, p.147).

I was then able to generate a concise collection of data that was transformed from raw to “cooked” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999), in that “cooked data” generates results.

When all the field notes and interview scripts were checked and duly modified, I started data analysis. The key task of a qualitative researcher “is to describe and explain what has been observed in the field” (Pole & Morrison, 2003, p.89). In my study this process began by identifying codes and patterns. This allowed me to establish and build a picture of the phenomenon in question (Brewer, 2000).

I read six sets of interview transcripts and six sets of field notes again and again to familiarize myself with the data and to gain a holistic understanding. During the process, I was guided by two research questions:

- What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh ?
- What are the students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?

The entire process involved the following steps:

1. Identifying primary *codes/ key words*: At a first step, I used a marker to mark or highlight all *ideas or keywords* which I considered relevant to the *research question* or *which I was interested in*. I considered those key words as primary codes and wrote them down on sheets of paper. The entire key words are presented in the figures in relation to the relevant research question, themes and concepts (see appendices 2-5).
2. Producing *concepts*: After I wrote the key word lists, I grouped similar key words together to reduce their number. I then started thinking about their close relationship in terms of their meaning and then produced *concepts* from the grouped key words. This produced 41 phrases that I named as *concepts*. I used this to focus a re-reading of data. The concepts are presented in the figures (see appendices 2-5).
3. As I read, I noted comments and sections of data that related to each of the concepts. I was able to color-code the data for ease of reference. Throughout the process, I used mind mapping in order to arrange the concepts in various combinations. I shuffled all the primary codes/ key words from concept to concept in order to identify similarity or difference in their meaning.
4. *Forming themes*: When I was able to make a meaningful relationship between the concepts and the data I confirmed the list of concepts, which I then evaluated for significance. To establish whether or not a concept was significant I did two things: first I counted the number of pieces of data to judge its usefulness in shedding light on the two primary research questions. This allowed me to rank the concepts in order of importance.

Then I looked at the important *concepts* in relation to the full list. I combined several that were similar in content and noted *concepts* where there was limited data or poor quality data in relation to the main research questions. The figure presented below provides an example of the procedure:

Figure: 2: The procedure of data analysis for theme two

	Key words	Concepts	Theme two
Research question 2: What are the students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?	Oral presentation, approach, Group discussion, class test, class work, group work, home work, assignments	14.Students understand SBA as assessment of their learning process through their active participation in different activities	Students' understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA
	Class rest, regular feedback, exam preparation, exam phobia, free of anxiety	15.Students understand SBA as a means of reducing exam pressure by providing day-to-day feedback on their progress	
	Communicative ability, helpful attitude, co-operation, calm, noise, sincere, regular, cleanliness	16. Students understand the purpose of SBA as to bring positive changes and overall development to their behavior	
	Brainstorming, group discussion, better understanding, preparedness, peer-teaching, verbal answer, grammar	17.Students understand that SBA makes the learning process easier	
	Serious, sincere, punctual, regular, studious, attentive, active	18.Feedback on class tests, classwork and assignments makes students more aware of their learning progress.	

This process allowed me to form five themes from the data under which the findings of the study are discussed. The themes were,

Theme one: The nature of practicing SBA in the everyday classroom.

Theme two: Factors hindering the implementation of SBA.

Theme three: Students' understandings of the nature and purposes of SBA

Theme four: Students' perception of the usefulness of SBA.

Theme five: Students' voice regarding their needs.

Verification of Themes

I sat with two of my classmates from the qualitative research methodology course and provided them the key words, concepts and themes lists, along with the relevant data, to examine whether or not the coding and produced concepts were relevant to the data. They also examined the relevance of the themes in relation to the research questions. Their suggestions helped me to make small changes so that the relationship between the concepts and themes looked more relevant. This allowed me to merge theme five into theme two which was relevant to both research questions. Finally, I grouped the data into four emerging themes relevant to the research questions. They were:

Theme one: The nature of practicing SBA in the everyday classroom.

Theme two: Students' understandings of the nature and purposes of SBA

Theme three: Students' perception of the usefulness of SBA.

Theme four: Factors hindering the implementation of SBA

Under these themes the findings of this study are discussed with the support of relevant data in chapter four.

Addressing the Ethical Issues

As an educational researcher, I have a responsibility to ensure that in whatever research paradigm or educational setting I work, there must be an ethic of respect to those who participate. As the participants of this study are of young ages, it is my ethical responsibility to inform the participants, their guardians, teachers and principals of the schools about any potential risk and protect them from any kind of harm. Therefore, I addressed these issues in the information sheets and consent forms that I sent to them in the following way:

- I sent information letters/sheets explaining the nature of the research (see appendices 6-9). A consent form was attached to each information letter to the principals of the schools, seeking permission to access the schools and observe class, the willingness of the participants to be interviewed, and consent for publication of research findings. It also expressed their right to withdraw at any time. I entered the classrooms after getting the

permission and consent of the school principal, class teacher and all participants in both schools (see appendices 10-13). The participants took part in the observation and interview sessions willingly. Thus, the issues regarding **informed consent, deception, coercion, voluntary participation, and permission** are addressed.

- The information sheets also explained the confidentiality of responses to ensure that neither the participants nor their institutions would be identified and data would be stored securely. When I was writing the field notes on my observations and transcribing the interview records, I used pseudonyms for all participants. The schools were referred to by numbers: school-1 and 2. Therefore, **the risks related to anonymity, confidentiality and participants' safety** are addressed in the data.
- The indication of negotiability of the dates and possible times for participant observations and interviews was addressed in the information sheets. All the observations and interviews took place at dates and times which were convenient for the participants. Thus **privacy** is addressed.
- On completion of writing each field note and transcribing each interview record, I sent them to the participants concerned for member checking, and therefore the risk of **fabrication or misinterpretation of information** is addressed.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings

Introduction

This chapter reports on the four themes of significance from a study of SBA implementation and secondary students' perspectives of SBA in Bangladesh. The themes of the chapter are:

Theme one: The nature of practicing SBA in the everyday classroom.

Theme two: Students' understandings of the nature and purposes of SBA.

Theme three: Students' perception of the usefulness of SBA.

Theme four: Factors hindering the implementation of SBA.

The findings covered a number of aspects including the practicing of SBA in the classrooms, students' attitude towards the system, factors hindering its implementation, students' opinions regarding their need to achieve what is expected of them, the effectiveness of SBA etc. Students' views on SBA and implementation practices are discussed in the context of the research question. Direct quotations from the field notes and transcriptions are used to highlight both similar and individually unique viewpoints. The findings are discussed under each theme within a separate section as follows:

Theme one: The nature of practicing SBA in the everyday classroom.

From field notes and student interviews I gained insights into the daily practice of SBA in the secondary school classrooms of Bangladesh. When observing the sessions in secondary classrooms I saw how the teachers were implementing SBA in teaching and learning activities. Students were also following their teachers' instruction. This gave me insight into how the teachers and students understood SBA. My knowledge about SBA was thus constructed through the sessions, which were reflected in my field notes. Broadly, I gathered evidence of SBA implementation via the ways teachers engaged students in activities and then monitored them; by watching students' spontaneous classroom participation; and via teachers' formal assessments of students' class participation. In this section of the chapter I will discuss the theme of SBA in the

everyday classroom. The theme is subdivided into following three parts in order to discuss the findings meaningfully:

1. Teachers are engaging students in various activities and are monitoring them appropriately.
2. Students' participation is active and spontaneous.
3. Teachers are assessing their students under SBA based on their performance in the class.
4. Distribution of SBA marks by the teachers.

1. Teachers are engaging students in various activities and are monitoring them appropriately.

This sub-theme represents a part of the overall picture of the SBA activities that took place in the daily classroom engagements of the teachers and the students. This section mainly focused on how the teachers were shaping SBA in the classroom. My understanding about how the teachers are constructing SBA in their daily teaching was described in the field notes. Teachers engaged students in SBA activities such as question - answer, writing on the black board, group discussion, presentation and homework. These activities developed and assessed the skills of the students in the expected realms, such as oral expression, communicative ability, problem solving and interest in learning. An example of this is seen in Mr. Karim's class:

"During his lecture, sometimes Mr. Karim asks questions to the class from the lecture material to check whether the students are attentive in their class work....Mr. Karim is writing a sentence on the black board and telling the students to copy (School-1, Field note-1)....Mr Karim has divided the students into 10 groups and explains what to do in the group work.... Mr. Karim is walking around the class room to monitor students' group work. He is also providing them assistance where necessary....Mr. Karim invites students one-by-one from different groups to present different parts of group work in front of the class, and after presentation he provides feedback....Mr Karim is writing the homework for the next class on the

blackboard....He is instructing the students to write down the home work on their dairies.”(school-1, field note-2)

In Mrs. Seema’s class she also engaged the students and assessed them through different activities. As homework holds 5 marks out of total 30 SBA marks in each subject, she collected the homework from the class and then she directed them in class work and group activities. This field note shows a more direct and individualized approach being used:

“Mrs. Seema is giving an oral class test on the magnetism chapter of the science syllabus....She is asking questions to the students and listening to the answers (School -2, Field note-3)....There is a pile of pieces of homework gathered on the table of Mrs. Seema’s class.... Mrs. Seema is writing the homework for the next class on the black board... She is also instructing the students to write down the homework in their diaries....(School-2, Field Note-2)....Mrs. Seema is providing feedback on the presentations of the groups and encourages them with a big round of applause....Mrs. Seema is asking a group-work related question to one of the students as the student was not active in group work.”(School 2, Field note-3)

In the practice of SBA, teachers are expected to evaluate students’ skills or learning progress based on their class performance. Thus the ways (e.g. class work, group work, class tests, presentations, homework) in which Mr. Karim and Mrs. Seema were engaging the students and monitoring progress of students’ performance seemed to be appropriate to their SBA role.

When I talked with students about the daily practices of SBA, they told me that teachers were engaging them in various activities in order to assess their skills and behavior. For example, Poly asserted:

“The teacher distributed a pair of magnets to each group so that we could examine the attraction and repulsion of the two different poles.”

Ali and Hasan spoke similarly about their practical work. Students of both schools have also talked about their engagement in other activities like doing assignments, home work or group work.

Hasan stated:

"We are assigned some individual projects as our physics assignments."

Salma stated:

"I have just completed doing my assignment on science."

Ali stated:

"We have submitted our assignment for English paper 2 and the topic was "Making a newspaper".

Students also talked about bringing homework regularly to the class. For example,

Ali said:

"Every day we submit our homework and the teacher counts the numbers of books....he then compare the numbers with the number of students present....if there is a difference, the teacher identifies who has not brought homework and notes his roll number....students are regular in bringing their homework."

Abul admitted:

"When I was in class six, I was not very regular in submitting homework, but this year, because of SBA, I am conscientious about that."

Poly informed me:

"Homework is now an important factor as teachers are serious about it."

Students' comments about taking part in the above discussed activities in their daily learning process provided information which developed my understanding about the teacher's role in implementing SBA in the classroom. Though it was understood that teachers followed specific criteria to assess students, it was not clear to me how purposeful some assessment criteria were in regard to students' learning. Students told me about the relation between getting a score and submitting homework but they did not say anything about any relation between getting a good score and good quality homework. Thus I interpreted this as if submission of homework is enough to get a score, it is doubtful whether doing home work can improve students' learning. At the interview sessions I came to know more about teachers' roles in conducting other SBA activities in the classrooms.

Salma said:

“During group work the teacher monitors the whole class by going to each group....he also helps us if neededwe try to participate in the group work actively as we know that the teacher is monitoring us.”

Ali described the following:

“There are 30 students in our class. Usually we are divided into 4 groups of 7/8 students....at first, the teacher selects group leaders for each group and then she forms groups....the group leader is changed in the next class.”

These comments are the evidence of the active role of teachers in SBA practice. The participants spoke about the classwork and class test, and the teacher's role in organizing those.

Poly said:

“Through the spot-tests the teacher assesses whether the students are attentive or not....she also gives us scores on the tests.”

Both Ali and Hasan described similarly as the said the following:

“On completion of a lesson, the teacher gives a test either in written or in oral form which we call a class test....everyday our teachers are monitoring our class work in this way.”

Salma told me:

“Teachers ask questions while delivering lectures to check our attentiveness in class work, and they usually give small-scale exams on some lessons from a chapter as class tests.”

Students and teachers roles in different activities indicated that teachers were sincere about following different SBA criteria in the classrooms. The teachers' role in SBA practices (such as assigning the students class work, group work, class tests, presentations and homework) that was evident in my field notes and students' interviews indicated that they were practicing SBA in the classroom day-to-day. Thus, these findings partly described the nature of SBA practices and also represented one aspect of theme one. In this way the findings of this sub-section addressed the first research question *“What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh?”*

2. Students' participation is active and spontaneous.

The role of students and their activities are crucial in the practice of SBA. It is also an integral part of the nature of SBA. This sub-theme reports on the findings that related to these.

I observed that students were taking part in different learning activities willingly and promptly. Their activities made me feel that they understood their role in SBA included remaining active during the sessions. I noted their activities and expressions on my field notes. At the time of interview I asked them about their motivation for such actions. All the interviewees told me that they were doing everything out of their self-motivation, interest and enthusiasm. The data in both students' comments and my observation helped me to develop the idea that they are participating spontaneously. About school-1, I wrote in my field note:

"When Mr. Karim. asks questions from the lesson, almost every student in the class raises a hand to answer (they seem very active)....Within 2 minutes the whole class (100 students) divided into 10 groups by changing their seating arrangements....the students of Mr. Karim's class completed their group tasks within the allocated time (10 mins.) and went towards the rope to hang their group work....When the presentation of group 1 was done, the next group came automatically; they are not waiting for Mr. Karim to call them (note:they seem concerned about time constraints and willing to do their work)." (School-1, field note-1)

I also wrote in my field note about school-2:

"The entire class raised their hands to show their interest in going to the blackboard to write there....Mrs. Seema invited Ali and Poly to write on the blackboard and they came to the board within a few seconds (School-2, Field note-2)....When Mrs. Seema distributed the magnets to each group, all group members seemed to be eager to examine them and see what happens...at each and every point Mrs. Seema discusses the findings, students takes notes on that instantly."(School-2, Field Note-3)

A participatory classroom was formally introduced in secondary classrooms in Bangladesh through SBA. This system aimed to ensure students' active participation. The evidence from my field notes clearly described how actively and spontaneously the students were taking part in their daily teaching and learning practices. At the interview sessions with the students I asked them about why they were taking part in different activities so actively. Though there were some differences in the using of sentences to express their feeling, after summarizing their comments I felt that all the comments contained similar meaning. Thus, I interpreted that they were taking part spontaneously. Students' comments about taking part actively in different activities are outlined.

Poly's view regarding remaining active in the class room was:

"Hearing a lecture for a long time is boring, but when teachers engage us in other activities like group discussion, observing something or writing on the blackboard, we get rid of the boredom and automatically become active."

Poly's comments indicated that the SBA activities were the means they used to get rid of monotony while attending the class and thus they became active naturally. Students' comments on some specific activities are presented here for an example.

Ali's thoughts regarding their active participation in class work of Mrs. Seema's class:

"The topic or type of an activity makes us curious and active.... When we are assigned something which requires us to think, discuss or brainstorm we naturally became involved and active...For example, in today's class, when teacher told us to observe the magnets and list the findings, instantly we started to examine those and to write down the findings that we observed."

I interpreted Ali's comment as asserting that the opportunity to be involved practically in the learning process under SBA brought activeness and self-motivation into their class room behavior.

Rita spoke about her active role in Mr. Karim's class:

"In fact, the system requires us to be actively involved. Here we are learning by doing....Today, teacher showed us how to write a sentence correctly and then he wrote some incomplete sentences and told us to

complete the sentences correctly by matching them with each other....this type of class work is not monotonous, rather these are very interesting to us....so we tried to do the matching as quickly as possible.”

Rita’s comment also pointed out how the teaching and learning activities made them participate actively in the classwork.

Salma described how group work involved them in active participation in the class. She said:

“We have a large number of students in our class (100)....so, when our teacher delivers a lecture, it is not possible for him to look at all the students, and students sitting in the back row or side row do not see the blackboard or hear the teacher well....so the students become inattentive or inactive....but when we do group work for SBA everyone becomes active and attentive.”

Salma’s response enabled me to make sense of how group work under SBA was useful to make a large number of students attentive and active in the classroom.

Abul explained their motivation:

“SBA begun when we were in class VI....initially, most of the students felt uncomfortable being the presenter of group work....when we realized that presentation carries marks we become interested in presenting or writing the presentation paper....seeing some of us doing the presentation successfully, the other students also became interested in presentation, and now everybody shows interest in presenting something in front of the class.... now we are not doing these only for getting marks, but also doing these out of interest.”

Abul’s comment gave me insight into how the scoring system of their activity guided them to take part in presentation. I also learned how peers’ performance encouraged the students to perform better, and finally how they started becoming interested in this activity.

These comments specially contained information about students’ role in the daily practice of SBA. As students’ active participation in class work, group work or presentation is a criterion of SBA, these findings were closely related to the nature of

SBA. Therefore, the above discussed findings served to answer the research question “*What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh?*”

3. Teachers are assessing their students under SBA based on their performance in the class.

The way in which the teachers assess the students is another important aspect of SBA. This sub-theme provides evidence on teachers’ assessment practices in the classroom. The evidence was taken from both field notes and student interviews. I was keen to observe how the teachers assessed the students under SBA in their classes. The activities of both teachers made me understand that they were assessing the students based on their performance in homework, class work, group work, class tests, presentations, communicative ability etc. I developed an impression that the teachers were putting their knowledge of assessment to use under SBA. I therefore asked the students at the interviews about the teachers’ assessment, and in response they informed me how they were being assessed by their teachers every day.

About Mr. Karim’s assessment practices I noted:

“Mr. Karim is watching the group activities by going to each group and is keeping eye on all group members.’ ‘He is inviting particular students for presentations.” (School-1, Field note-3)

“There are 10 poster papers hung on the rope as the group presentation papers. These are in different colors. Mr. Karim selected one yellow poster paper with nice handwriting in black as the best one. He is telling the class to give a big round of applause to group 7.” (School-1, Field note-1)

In order to assess the students, Mrs. Seema was involving the students in different activities. For example, I observed in Mrs. Seema’s class:

“After writing half of the process on the black board, Mrs. Seema invites students who are willing to write down the rest of the process on the blackboard (it seems that she is trying to ensure their active participation).’....When Ali and Poly are writing on the blackboard, she

assists them by providing some information.” (School-2, Field note-1)....”Mrs. Seema announces that only group-1 and group-2 will present today (possibly she wants to list the scores of students of those particular groups).”(School-2, Field note-2)

Analyzing the findings I was able to understand that teachers were assessing the students under different criteria of SBA and thus they were engaging particular students/ groups in activities such as group work, presentation or writing on the blackboard. I interpreted this as that they were doing so in order to score their performance.

As each observation was followed by a semi-structured interview with one student, I was keen to know the student’s cognition of the process of assessment. In response to my question they said that they were being assessed by the teachers everyday in several activities. Students seemed to be aware of their scoring process and concerned about getting good scores. Their explanation of how the teachers distributed the SBA marks on their performance allowed me to interpret their understanding in this way. The following data presents their explanation:

Ali stated:

“This class test is usually taken either orally or in writing....The score of the class test is added to the scores of other criteria of SBA....this makes us take care about that.”

As Salma said:

“At the time of the oral test, everybody tries to answer correctly as there are marks for that and teachers keep records of that.”

Poly’s perspective on scoring of group work:

“When it is time for group work, everybody needs to participate actively because getting marks depends on our performance.”

Rita added her view on teachers’ assessment:

“Especially when we get a big clap or teacher’s praise after the presentation, we become highly encouraged to perform well.”

Ali’s perspective on being assessed in class work:

“I am interested in writing on the blackboard as I hope it will give me a good score in the mark for class work under SBA.”

Hasan's response on overall assessment practices:

"Teachers are assessing us through assignments, class tests, home work, group work and presentations during each term."

These comments addressed the point of my questions about how the teachers assessed the students under SBA in everyday classrooms. At the same time these comments also answered my first research question '*What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh?*'

4. Distribution of SBA mark by the teachers

This sub-theme describes and provides evidence of students' understanding of the distribution of marks under SBA. When I was observing the classes I was keen to observe how the teachers were scoring the students under SBA. Though I did not see any scoring list with Mr. Karim or Mrs. Seema as a means of record keeping, I saw both teachers were asking questions to individual students, or going to the groups to assess their activities, or inviting students for presentation. I wrote in my field notes:

"Mrs Seema is listening to the answers of the students....she is going to the groups and asking group-work related questions to the students (School-2, Field note-3)....One student in a group seems inattentive and Mr. Karim is going towards herhe is asking her what has she understood from the group discussion (School-1, Field note3)....Mr. Karim invites groups 3 and 4 to come to present their work (School-1, field note2).....Mr Karim is asking questions from today's lesson' (School-1, field note-1)....Though Mr. Karim is asking the students questions to assess their class work, he does not have any student name-list with him. (Note: I wonder how he will remember the performance of a particular student later on!)." (School-1, Field note1)

"Mrs. Seema is assessing the group activities....she is going to the groups and asking questions....Mrs. Seema is observing the group work and

presentation....I have not seen her noting students' scores anywhere.....(I wonder how will she remember their scores!)” (School-2, field note-3)

My observation made me understand the way in which the teachers were assessing the students and also made feel that they were sincere and honest about scoring the students under specific SBA criteria such as class work, group work and presentation etc. At the same time I felt curiosity about the teachers' record keeping technique as I did not see them maintain any written account of the marks that they were allocating to the students. But as it was not possible for me to interview the teacher due to the limited scope of my study it was not possible for me to explore this issue. I considered that as a limitation of the study and it is discussed in the fifth chapter. However, to double-check my understanding about the allocation of the 30 SBA marks I asked relevant questions to the participants whom I saw being assessed by the teacher during my observation. In response, the participants outlined their understanding of SBA mark allocation by their teachers and expressed their satisfaction with the marking.

Ali informed me:

“Last year I scored 25 to 28 out of 30 in each subject....if somebody attends class regularly and participates in all activities he or she gets a good mark, but irregular students do not get good marks....on completion of class tests, the teacher collects the test papers and on the next day he publishes the result.”

As Rita said:

“We try to do our homework regularly because it carries 5 marks....if somebody does not do that, he/she will not get any marks....we have not seen any irregular or inactive student get good marks.”

Hasan's statement regarding homework marks was similar to Rita's.

Ali outlined his understanding as:

“At the time of group work, the teacher not only calls on the leader but also asks questions of all the group members.... Answering correctly

means a student is active, and only then does the teacher give a good score, otherwise not....our teachers give us scores dependent on our performance.”

Salma spoke about that day's group work marking as:

“Today we will be given a score based on our group activity.... groups who did well will get good marks.”

On a further elaboration, Salma also commented on other activities:

“We do class work and group work every day....as it is not possible for the teacher to check everyone's copy every day within the limited time, he checks some of the copies randomly and gives scores....for oral presentation he does the same, and maintains a checklist to note the scores of those students....the students who do not do this do not get marks.”

Though Hasan and Salma were not in the same school, the process he described of his teachers' marking is the same as Salma's. My observation and the students' understanding of their teachers' role in SBA scoring gave me insight into teachers' dutifulness in the marking process. Thus, these conversations also spoke about the nature of SBA practice and answered research question-1.

My first research question was about the nature, purpose and design of SBA. The above discussed findings provided the answer to my first research question as they emerged from my observation of the classrooms and interviews with the students. The classroom observation enabled me to understand the collaborative activities of the students and teachers through which they shaped SBA in their daily classroom context. The activities were, assigning homework and its submission and collection, active participation of teachers and students in class work, students' group work under teachers' supervision, teachers' assessment of the students through a spot test or a class test and teachers' observation of students' presentations. I noted them in my field notes which are presented as the findings. I felt that the students were acting as per their understanding of

SBA practice. To gain a further understanding about students' and teachers' roles I interviewed the students. Their response enabled me to comprehend that they were aware of the type and nature of the assessment and thus they were participating actively. I presented the responses as the findings which also answered the first research question.

Theme two: Students' understanding of the nature and purposes of SBA.

From the field notes of my observation I gained insight into how actively students were engaged in a number of different types of class work. Teachers' and students' interaction helped me to develop an understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA in a real classroom environment. Based on my knowledge gained about their role in classrooms, I asked related questions to the students at the interviews. I was particularly interested to know what the students understood about the nature and purposes of SBA. Their answers gave me the feeling that they were aware of the nature and purposes of SBA.

In this section I will discuss the theme of students' understandings about SBA. The evidence for this theme was collected by interviewing the students. The theme is subdivided into the following two parts for clarity:

1. Students have clear comprehension of the nature of SBA.
2. Students have a good understanding about the purposes of SBA

1. Students have clear comprehension of the nature of SBA.

When I talked to the students about the nature of SBA, or what SBA is, students' comments in response were quite similar. This sub-theme is focused on such comments which I obtained from the interviews. For example, Poly's definition of SBA was:

"SBA means School-Based Assessment. That is teachers are assessing us continuously through our daily classroom activities and school behavior."

Ali said:

"SBA means School-Based Assessmentthrough this teachers assess us in our daily activities."

Hasan said:

“SBA means School-Based Assessment....In this system, teachers are assessing us by assignment, class test, homework, group work and presentation throughout each term.”

When interpreting the definition and nature of SBA as given by the interviewees I found that their outlining were similar in terms of meaning, which was that they all knew that SBA means School-Based Assessment, where teachers are assessing them using different criteria during the sessions or school hours. Additionally, students' responses regarding the nature and definition of SBA indicated their sound comprehension of this.

2. Students have a good understanding about the purposes of SBA.

This sub-theme is about students' perception of the purposes or aims of SBA. The evidence for this sub-theme was also derived from the interviews. I found that though there was some difference in the way they expressed their views about the purposes of SBA, their understandings were very similar. For example, Ali stated:

“The aim of SBA is to assess our performance in our behavior, attentiveness, and active participation in the classroom through the daily teaching / learning activities.”

Hasan expressed the following:

“I think SBA has been introduced in order to reduce our study load for the year-final exam, and thus to reduce our exam phobia and also to make us more attentive during the sessions....nowadays we receive feedback on our day-to-day progress, so we try to learn the lessons just after the class, which helps us to get prepared for the final exam.”

Salma's view:

“Besides improving the quality of our education, I think SBA has also been introduced to bring about positive changes in our school behavior....

The students who were not so regular in attendance, attentive and calm in Class V or class VI have become polite and regular now.”

Abul added:

“Though SBA has been introduced to bring about holistic development in our learning and behavior, I think the most important aim is to develop communicative ability through group work and presentation....students who the first time used to feel shy about talking in front of the class have now become free through regular practice of presentation.”

“The purpose of SBA is to develop our ‘out-knowledge’....out-knowledge is knowledge which is not included in our textbook....we are achieving out-knowledge when we do our assignments....SBA also wants to develop some new skills among us such as presentation, group discussion, report writing.... It also wants to develop good qualities like co-operation and leadership in our behavior.’

Students’ views regarding the purpose of SBA were that it is to assess their classroom performance and overall behavior; to provide them formative feedback for exam preparation; to bring about positive changes in their behavior; to develop communicative skills and to develop knowledge exploration. These comments were very clearly articulated, which enabled me to feel that they had a good understanding of what SBA was and what purposes it serves. At the same time it was also quite interesting to me that the students were talking like education professionals. I guessed that they might have been instructed by their teacher about what to say regarding SBA. Therefore, I discuss this issue as a limitation of the study in the discussion chapter. However, it seemed that they were well informed about SBA’s aspiration to assess their overall development. When I was analyzing the data I considered it in relation to the research question ‘*What are students’ views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?*’ Students’ comments regarding the nature, aim or purposes of SBA were a reflection of their understanding about SBA which addressed the research question.

Theme three: Students’ perception of the usefulness of SBA.

When I was observing SBA practicing in the class VII classrooms I realized that students were maintaining regularity in attendance and were disciplined in their daily class work and homework. They seemed to me to be very positively engaged in performing any activities that are required for assessing them under SBA. I especially observed the participants to evaluate their thoughts regarding SBA. Their oral expression, enthusiasm and involvement indicated their positive attitude towards the assessment system. To gain further understanding about their feelings concerning SBA, I designed a question guide for the semi-structured interviews that I held with them. The data that was derived from the interviews described those students' positive feelings towards or perception about SBA. Some of their responses contained similar viewpoints or perceptions, and some were different from each other. Discussing the data in relation to the research question, *'What are students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?'* I was able to develop the theme *'Students' perception of the usefulness of SBA.'* As the data appeared as students' expressions of how they perceived SBA, I subdivided the theme into the following two parts in order to discuss the findings systematically.

1. SBA is helpful for learning and skill development.
2. SBA is helpful for bringing about positive changes in behavior.

1. SBA is helpful for learning and skill development.

This sub-theme provides evidence of students' views regarding the usefulness of different learning activities. I observed the students taking part in class work and class tests and also observed the class-work topic to be assigned as homework by the teacher. At the interview I asked the students about the effectiveness of their course work. In response they informed me that different learning activities were engaging them actively in the learning process, which enhanced the opportunity for them to practice any lesson

repeatedly. Further, they said that the practice had a positive effect on their learning. Their feelings were reflected in their following comments:

Ali commented:

“Teachers divide the lessons into manageable parts so that we can do them by various activities, and as we involve ourselves actively we understand the lesson well.... After one lesson we have to do homework on that, and also we have a class test on the same topic. In this way, we practise one lesson again and again which helps us remember it easily.”

Hasan said:

“In today’s class, the teacher showed us the process of producing electricity and we observed....then we discussed the process within our group and wrote that in our exercise books....finally, the teacher asked questions on that, and we had to answer and also to listen to others’ answers....in this way, we went through our lesson again and again and understood well....we have almost memorized that.”

The comments of both students indicated that the formative approaches of SBA such as assessment through class test, class work and homework were helpful for their learning. Salma’s understanding also supported a positive relation between SBA and easy memorization as she said:

“Now we are trying to understand any topic very actively through brainstorming....After having a clear conception of any topic in the class....we have to do homework which leads us to study the topic again at home and then to write it down....as a result the topic becomes easy for us to memorize.”

Abul said:

“By doing group work, class work and homework regularly and attentively we are practicing each topic more and more, and this helps us to memorize it quickly.”

Students’ opinions emphasized the positive impact of SBA on their learning. This was further seen when students talked about receiving feedback.

I noticed that Mrs. Seema and Mr. Ali were providing regular feedback to the students in class. At the interview sessions I asked about it. This sub-theme contains information on students’ attitudes towards receiving feedback under SBA. Ali’s view was:

“We are being benefited by group work and class tests because teachers provide us with feedback on those activities....sometimes teachers discuss the shortcomings of our work, and then we try to overcome those, and thus learn better....when we get poor marks in one class test we try to do better in the next test and study more, thus we learn better....if one group or one student performs superbly then the teacher praises them, which encourages other students to study hard.”

Hasan explained:

“When I read something, I usually think that I have understood that well, but at the time of writing it in the class test I find some difficulties in writing it properly....when the teacher gives feedback on that he/she explains where the problem is....then the matter becomes easily understandable to me and this enables me to learn accurately.”

Rita’s perspective:

“I was not good at English grammar but I had to do my assignment by myself in English....last year I got poor marks on my English assignment when I got feedback, I realized where to work more and I did itnow I am quite good at English grammar and this term I got a good mark.”

Abul commented:

“We sit tests regularly which require us always to be prepared....regular study is improving our learning.”

Students' positive attitude towards the formative assessment and feedback under SBA were reflected in their opinions. I interpret their opinions as 'regular feedback is helpful for better learning'. At the time of observing the group presentation in Mr. Karim's class, I noticed that the participants were preparing attractive presentation paper with wonderful handwriting, drawing and pasting. They were also careful about doing the presentation as nicely as they could. I was impressed at their oratorical skill. For example, I noted:

“Salma is writing on a yellow-color poster-paper with a blue marker; she is writing carefully....as Salma finished her writing, Rita started drawing at the four corners of the paper with red and green color pencils (School-1, Field note-2)....Hasan is presenting their work in front of the class....he speaks freely in a loud voice and with clear pronunciation....this indicates his oratorical and communicative skill....he is using a stick to indicate the points and speaks facing the class).” (School-2, Field note-2)

Seeing the students perform carefully, when interviewing I asked the six participants how meaningful the performances were to them. As they did not all perform in the same activity, my question referred to different activities as relevant to each participant. Students informed me that the performances were very useful to them as different types of activities helped them in developing advanced knowledge and skills. Some of their responses were:

Ali said:

“The topic of the assignment is not taken directly from our textbooks so we have to explore information in so many books, magazines and newspapers....thus we are learning the skill of how to explore....besides developing the skill our knowledge is also increasing....the handwriting

needs to be good and attractive in an assignment.....so we are trying to develop good handwriting.”

Ali also added:

“All the group members make their points and give opinions at the time of group discussion....we need to arrive at some common points which reflect the whole group’s view....in this way we are learning the process of information synthesis....we are also learning the skills of presentation.”

Similarly, Hasan and Salma also described their views about acquiring the skills of oral presentation, attractive handwriting and advanced knowledge through SBA.

Hasan added:

“To make them attractive, we need to draw or paste some pictures into some of our assignments and group presentation papers.... thus we are becoming creative too.”

Salma said:

“Through this assessment system we are practicing how to gather information through brainstorming....now we have become skilled in problem solving through brainstorming.”

Rita’s view:

“Besides developing oral presentation skill, we are also developing leadership skill when we take the role of group leader.”

Poly described:

“We are developing skills at presenting something in front of others....thus our communicative skill is improving....presentation is not just reading something out....we have to be careful about pronunciation, voice, style of talking....day-by-day we are achieving these skills.”

Abul considered:

“The students who felt shy about talking in front of an audience before are now presenting smartly....our communicative skills are improving in this way.”

At some stage of the interview sessions, three of the participants told me that their participation in some creative and innovative activities made them interested in working in the relevant fields in future. Their feeling indicates the broadening of their insight into choosing future professions.

Ali told me:

“I have made a newspaper as our English assignment....it is just a replica of a real newspaper....I had to follow and include everything here as in an original newspaper....I found the job very innovative and interesting...in future I want to work in such a field as a reporter or editor.”

Hasan said:

“We were assigned an individual project in our Science class....I had to gather and synthesise so much information....I collected a number of materials, chemicals and apparatus to complete the project....when working with all these I had a feeling of excitement as if I were a scientist....In future I will try to develop my career in a scientific research field.”

What Rita expressed was different; she said:

“Now English is easy for me and I want to do an honors degree in English....I want to be an English language teacher.”

Students' positive emotional expressions about the skills they were developing through SBA made me realize that skills such as communicating, leading, synthesizing information, problem solving through discussion, being creative and handwriting well, and insight into future carrier planning were being developed through SBA. These

expressions were the true reflection of how they perceived the usefulness of SBA and thus these findings answered research question 2 about their views on it.

2. SBA brings positive changes in students' behavior

This sub-theme outlines the findings which showed how SBA brought positive changes to students' behavior. I observed calm behavior and co-operation among the students in both settings. I was impressed to see their attentiveness, respectful attitude towards their teacher and helpful attitude towards their classmates. This impression is reflected in my field note as:

"Mrs. Seema is demonstrating the procedure....the study participants Ali, Hasan and Poly are observing the process with great attention....not only them, in fact, the whole class is attentive (School-2 ,Field note-1)....Hasan is helping one student, and he is copying Hasan's writing (School-2, Field note-2)....students are very quick to follow Mr. Karim's instruction....they instantly changed their seating arrangement and formed 10 groups....as Mr. Karim asked, they started coming towards the blackboard to hang the posters one-by-one without making any noise."(School-1, Field note-1)

Naturally, I was interested in discovering the driving force behind such nice student behavior. When interviewing the students, I talked to them about it and they told me that SBA classrooms were interesting and motivating. Thus, due to the positive effect of interest and motivation their behavior was changing gradually. The changes which were common to all interviewees' comments were their increased punctuality and communicative ability. They also spoke about a number of other positive changes. Their comments are outlined here:

Ali said:

"The students who had attended irregularly and were inattentive in class VI are comparatively regular and attentive now."

Hasan said:

“Learning by the active engagement in the process is helpful for understanding it....we are interested in this process and love to come to school.”

Abul’s perspective:

“Through regular feedback on the class work, group presentation or class test, we are informed of our potential instantly....this is encouraging and inspires us to attend classes regularly.”

In response to my query about helping others, Hasan said:

“As we work as a group, it is our responsibility to help each other so that our group can do better....in particular, we helped the member of our group who did not understand the topic as quickly as others.”

Rita described co-operation from a different point of view. She said:

“In our previous system all the classes were conducted by the lecture method, where there was no scope to talk to each other or to help each other....but now through group activities we are sharing our views....we can understand others' problems or difficulties in learning and we co-operate with each other.”

Salma’s comment:

“Those who were disobedient last year have become calmer now and do not make noise in class....because they are afraid about being assessed negatively....they also bring their homework regularly....and listen to the lecture attentively.”

Abul’s analysis of their positive change in behavior is different from others as he said:

“Our overall conduct and behavior are changing....we try to keep our classroom and desks clean....now students do not leave school after the tiffin-break like before.”

SBA aspired to bring about holistic development in students' behavior. The positive changes that the students realized had been taking place in their behavior due to SBA were helping others, being punctual, and being aware of cleanliness, obedience and attentiveness. These findings are the understandings that the students have formed about SBA, and thus the second research question about students' views on SBA is addressed.

Theme four: Factors hindering the implementation of SBA in the everyday classroom.

I observed some difficulties and limitations in the setting which were not favorable to implementing SBA in the everyday classroom, and some activities of the teachers also made me question the application of SBA in classroom reality. For example, I noted about insufficient duration:

“Date-5th Nov, 2010, Class VII, Subject- English, Period- 2nd, Time 11.00 am-11.30am, Students present-112....I entered Mr. Karim's class at 11.00am. There are long benches and desks where 6 students are sitting at each bench....the benches are placed very closely together. (Note: such a large class size! How do the teachers fit the group activities into only 30 minutes?)” (School-1, Field note-1).

“Mr. Karim has taken a small part of lesson 3 of the text book to teach to the students through group work....(note: I guess he reduced the content to a manageable volume appropriate for the class duration.) The class finishes at 11.30; only 4 groups have done their presentation.”(School-1, Field note-3).

I noticed insufficient teaching aids in Mrs. Seema's science class and noted:

'Mrs. Seema is showing the electricity flow process and students are observing with great attention.....Mrs Seema did not invite the students to do the test by themselves (Note: I think the school do not have enough teaching aids to provide to 4 groups at a time, and if they provide it to one group after another it will take a longer time, which will not fit in the class duration).' (School-2, Field note-1).

Based on my realization of these limitations, I wanted to know if the students held any opinion regarding limitations or barriers that they were facing during the practice of SBA in the classroom. The students expressed their views from their perspectives as follows:

Ali's statement regarding the difficulties of an overpopulated class:

"We prefer the participatory method to the lecture method....but it is not possible to conduct the whole class through participatory methods as the number of students is huge....that's why teachers usually conduct the class by the lecture method....few sessions are spent on group activities.... we need more classrooms and teachers so that all the sessions can be done in the participatory method and we can develop our skills."

Hasan's suggestion concerning insufficient teaching aids:

"Though the teacher demonstrated and explained the process clearly, for us to learn better, it would be more useful for us if we could do the test by ourselves....we do not have enough learning aids in our school so teachers are unable to provide them."

Rita's observation on session duration:

"We love to learn through group activities, but unfortunately we cannot do that regularly....30 minutes time is insufficient for that....If the duration of the sessions increased to 60 minutes it would be possible to complete a lesson through group activities, and then the syllabus would be completed in time."

Salma said:

“We have more than 100 students in our class, so it is not possible for our teacher to assess everyone’s performance everyday....every day we do our homework and class work and teachers assess us randomly.... Any day or time they wish, they check our written work so that they can see if we are regularly completing our class work and group work.... This allows them to give us a score.”

Such responses by the students indicated that teachers have too high a workload to manage within the sociocultural context of classroom reality; therefore they had to minimize or modify some assessment aspects of SBA in the classroom.

Both my views and students' voices were noted in the field notes and interview transcripts. During the data analysis I noted the similar views reflected in both the field notes and interview transcripts. I interpreted these as factors hindering the implementation of SBA in the everyday classroom. These factors were over-populated classrooms, sessions of insufficient duration and a lack of sufficient teaching / learning aids. I also came to an understanding of the impact of the hindering factors on the teachers, as the factors increased workload for the teachers and thus they had to modify the assessment process in some respects.

The findings presented under theme four address both research questions as they describe the factors hindering SBA practice in both classroom reality and from the students' perspective. I considered them first in relation to the research question about how SBA looks in classroom reality. The hindering factors that I noticed such as an inappropriately large class size for one class teacher, insufficient teaching and learning aids, and the insufficient duration of sessions relate to this research question. The students' comments on the need for more teachers, more learning aids and longer-lasting sessions also indicated the barriers the teachers faced in practicing SBA satisfactorily in their classrooms every day. I found these views also had a bearing on Research question two, about students' views of SBA.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

In this final chapter I draw on the findings from the previous two chapters and discuss them in relation to the research questions. The discussion draws a conclusion to the findings by considering them in relation to the literature outlined in chapter two. This chapter also includes a discussion on the limitations of this study, which I realized during data gathering. Finally, this chapter draws an overall conclusion to the study.

Addressing the Research Questions

In this section of the chapter I will provide answers to the research questions and discuss how the decisions about the answers were made. Broadly, I found four answers to the research questions. These are:

1. Generally, SBA practice is occurring as planned.

This answer addresses research question one, *'What does SBA look like in secondary classrooms of Bangladesh?'*

2. Students have a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA.
3. Students perceive that SBA is useful for them in terms of learning and developing skills as well as good behavior.

Answers 2 and 3 address research question two, *'What are students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?'*

4. Factors relating to insufficient classrooms, teachers and teaching aids, and session durations are hindering the practice of SBA.

1. Generally, SBA practice is occurring as planned.

The first theme of the findings was about the nature of SBA in the everyday classroom. The findings showed that teachers were engaging students in various activities, students' participation was active and spontaneous, and teachers were monitoring them appropriately. Activities included submitting homework, answering teachers' questions during the session, taking notes in their written work, listening to the lecture attentively, doing group work actively, presenting well and taking part in class tests. Teachers were assessing the students by the mentioned criteria to assign scores under SBA based on their performance. I discussed the findings in relation to similar assessment practices found in the literature in chapter two. I found that the practice of assessing students in Bangladesh secondary classrooms under specific criteria such as class tests, classwork, homework, oral presentation, group work and assignments (NCTB, 2006) appeared very similar to the criteria-referenced or standards-based assessment of international contexts (e.g. New Zealand's standards-based assessment (Brown, Irving and Keegan, 2008), outlined in that chapter).

The following section of the chapter deals with answering the research question about students' understanding and perception of SBA in Bangladesh. Theme two and three of the findings contained a detailed account on how the students made sense of SBA, with answering the following to the research question:

2. Students have a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA.

The findings grouped under theme two showed how the students perceived the nature and purpose of SBA. Broadly, the views that they held regarding the nature of SBA were that it was school-based assessment: a continuous assessment in the everyday classroom, in which teachers assessed students' daily classroom activities (e.g. class work, group work, homework, class tests etc.) and also their school behavior.

I found that students' understandings of the nature of SBA portrayed in the findings and the nature of SBA described in the literature by NCTB (2006) (for example, its composition of class test; class work and practical work; homework; assignment; oral presentation and group work) were similar. Thus, I conclude that the students have a clear understanding of SBA. The findings on students' views of the purpose of SBA were that it was to assess their classroom performance and overall behavior, to provide them with formative feedback in order to prepare them well in covering the course material for the end-of-year exam, to bring about positive changes in their behavior, to develop communicative skills, and to develop skills in exploring knowledge from external sources.

Similar purposes or aims of SBA are highlighted in the literature: for example, to improve quality of teaching, learning and assessment (Gonzales, 2009); to contribute to students' overall grades and to bring about positive changes in their behavior (NCTB, 2006) and to assess students' holistic development (Begum and Farooqui, 2006). Thus, this discussion supported the argument that students have a good understanding of the purpose of SBA.

3. Students perceive that SBA is useful for them in terms of learning and developing skills as well as good behavior.

The findings presented under theme three described how the students perceived the purposefulness or usefulness of the application of SBA in secondary classrooms in Bangladesh. Students' expressions that came out vividly in the findings were: repeated practicing of a topic through different activities made it more easily memorable; formative feedback helped them to learn better; positive changes in their behavior were brought about through SBA; SBA was helpful for developing advanced knowledge and new skills; SBA sessions were more attractive and interesting than usual sessions; and through SBA they gained insights for their future career planning. All the comments indicated without doubt students' positive attitude towards the usefulness of the

formative approaches of SBA. Their views also informed us about how the broader objectives of SBA are achieved through the formative assessment of SBA. These have been outlined in the literature by Begum and Farooqui (2006) as problem solving, expressing thoughts clearly in speech, learning to behave appropriately and developing sound personal and social values. Thus the answer addressing the second research question was formed.

4. Factors relating to insufficient classrooms, teachers and teaching aids, and session durations are hindering the practice of SBA.

Theme four concerned the findings relating to factors hindering the implementation of SBA. This theme was relevant to both research questions. The findings described some difficulties which were affecting the implementation of SBA in the reality of the day-to-day classroom. The difficulties identified in the findings were insufficient teaching/learning aids, insufficiently long sessions, overpopulated classrooms and a few numbers of teachers in proportion to the huge numbers of pupils in the classrooms. It also emerged from the students' views that due to these limitations it was not possible to conduct participatory sessions regularly - sessions which were useful to assess a student's performance using six specific criteria under SBA. It emerged from the findings that teachers did not have enough time to assess these huge numbers of pupils every day, and thus they assessed them randomly. In other words, it seemed that assessment under specific criteria was time consuming and increased teachers' workload, which led them to modify the assessment process to fit it to the sociocultural context of a secondary classroom in Bangladesh. Similar limitations on the application of standards-based assessment in international contexts were discussed in the literature by several researchers (Rawlins et al; 2005). For example, they identified the issues of workload problems for teachers, time consumption in absolute terms and increased equipment costs. Such hindering factors are also similar to the challenges or difficulties outlined by Begum and Farooqui (2006) as time constraints and teachers' workload problems were

also revealed from their SBA study on teachers. These findings portrayed the barriers to the implementation of SBA in everyday classrooms from the contexts of both classroom practice and students' views. Thus, these findings answer both questions, about the nature of SBA and students views about SBA.

Limitations of the Study

I recognized some limitations of this study both during data gathering and also at the time of data analysis. These limitations are discussed below.

The participants whom I interviewed were nominated by their class teacher. Due to ethical reasons I had to provide information letters for the teachers and the participants containing information about the nature and objective of the study. At the time of interview, and also when transcribing the interviews, I felt that the definition of SBA provided by the students and the purpose/aim of SBA described by the students was too well-articulated to have come from the students. I felt that the students might have been instructed by their teachers about what to say regarding SBA. This realization made me take care in how I queried other aspects of SBA so I could avoid this limitation. I was keen to use probing questions in such a manner as to draw out students' true feelings or true views.

In keeping with a study in a limited area appropriate for a Master's level thesis, I had to explore only the students' views regarding SBA. In some cases, at the time of data collection I felt the need to gain further understanding of some phenomenon, which would be possible if I could interview the teachers too. For example, I observed that teachers did not keep any formal record of the assessment scores of students. Naturally, I was curious to know how they would remember students' scores to complete the mark list on a later period. Similarly, when interviewing students I learned about the relationship between submitting homework and getting marks. On further questioning, students could not tell me anything about their experience of the relationship between

good quality homework and receiving good marks. It thus made me think that if submission of homework alone is enough to get a score, then to what extent is it useful in improving students' learning. But, as I was unable to interview the teachers, I could not satisfy my curiosity. I consider these issues discussed above as the limitations of this study.

Conclusion

SBA is a relatively new approach to secondary education in Bangladesh. As it was a paradigm shift in the educational assessment landscape, it has been necessary to explore what it looks like in the reality of the classroom and how the students feel about it. Evaluating the findings in relation to national and international literature reveals that this assessment is being practiced conscientiously. Teachers are trying to follow the instructions of the NCTB guideline sincerely. Despite having some factors hindering teaching and learning support at the management level, students seem satisfied with and interested in this assessment system. It is also revealed by the findings that the formative approach of SBA helps the students in learning. The system also seems helpful for the development of new skills and for bringing about positive changes in students' overall behavior.

There are limitations to the findings that can be drawn due to the limited scale of this study and the data-gathering process. This could be addressed with larger-scale research in future. I would like to recommend that researchers explore both students' and teachers' views through focus group interviews to address questions about the implementation of SBA. I would also like to recommend that education personnel and concerned government agencies should pay attention to research findings regarding both benefits and pitfalls of SBA at the implementation level. The experience of the researchers should be taken into consideration and concerned bodies need to monitor the reality of the classroom and work together to promote the successful implementation of SBA nationwide. It is our expectation that the government of Bangladesh will sincerely

try to provide sufficient teachers, classrooms and other support to implement the system in all secondary schools. I hope that if we can overcome the existing limitations SBA will succeed in advancing the holistic development of our children, and they will prove themselves to be the successful leaders of our nation in future.

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Appendices

Appendix-1

SBA Scoring Checklist for the subject Teacher

Subject-----

Name and ID of the student	Class test			Class work		Practical work		Home work		Assignment		Oral presentation		Group work		Course work
	Test- 1	Test- 2	SBA mark 5	mark	SB A mar k 5	mark	SBA mark 5	mark	SBA mark 5	mark	SBA mark 5	mark	SBA mark 5	mark	SBA mark 5	Total mark 30
1																
2																
3																

(Source: NCTB, 2006)

Appendix-2

Figure 1: The procedure of data analysis for theme one

	Key words	Concepts	Theme One
Research question 1: What does SBA look like in the secondary classroom in Bangladesh?	Group work , group formation, group discussion	1. Teachers engage the students in group work	The nature of SBA practicing in everyday classrooms .
	Observing, monitoring closely , questioning, and asking for explanation	2. Teachers observe and monitor their group discussion	
	Presentation, voice, listening , feedback	3. Teachers observe student's presentation	
	Questioning, answering, questions, written , orally	4. Teachers conduct class test	
	Science assignment , English assignment , assigned project , submit , newspaper, Jesus, good handwriting, creative	5. Students do assignments	
	Active participation, listening and writing , one minute, seating arrangement , group formation , group work, group discussion , decision making, point gathering , report writing , presenting, session duration , one minute colorful, good handwriting, hanging papers	6. Students look prompt, active and enthusiastic in class work, group work and presentation	
	Attentive, observing closely , examining , discussing in groups, listening , note taking , drawing , magnets, jars, copper, iron, electricity	7. Students are attentive	
	Regular attendance , increased attendance, Coming regularly	8. Students are punctual	
	Homework copies , study at home, serious, bring regularly	9. Students submit their homework	
	Monitoring , practical works, teacher going to groups , questioning , scoring, matching, sentence, checking notebooks	10. Teachers assess the students on classwork and group work	
	Inviting , particular student , listening , voice, feedback, scoring	11. Teachers assess the students on oral presentation	
	Assigned , assignment topic, newspaper, project, Jesus, information, guidance , good score	12. Teachers assess the students on assignments	
	Conduct class test, orally , written , ask question	13. Teachers assess the students on tests	

Appendix-3

Figure 2: The procedure of data analysis for theme two

	Key words	Concepts	Theme Two
Research question 2: What are the students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?	Oral presentation, approach, Group discussion, class test, class work, group work, homework, assignments	14.Students understand SBA as assessment of their learning process through their active participation in different activities	Students' understanding of the nature and purpose of SBA
	Class rest, regular feedback , exam preparation, exam phobia, free of anxiety	15.Students understand SBA as a means of reducing exam pressure by providing day-to-day feedback on their progress	
	Communicative ability, helpful attitude , co-operation, calm , noise, sincere, regular , cleanliness	16. Students understand the purpose of SBA as to bring positive changes and overall development to their behavior	
	Brainstorming, group discussion , better understanding, preparedness, peer-teaching , verbal answer, grammar	17.Students understand that SBA makes the learning process easier	
	Serious, sincere, punctual, regular, studious, attentive, active	18.Feedback on class tests, class work and assignments makes students more aware of their learning progress.	

Appendix-4

Figure 3: The procedure of data analysis for theme three

	Key words	Concepts	Theme Three
Research question 2: What are the students' views on SBA in secondary schools in Bangladesh?	Conscientious, regular, studious , overall grade	19. Awareness of progress makes them study more	Students perception of the usefulness of SBA
	Behaving well, obedient, calm, boldness , shyness-free, helping others , isolation, co-operation(?), social	20. Students have become comparatively more calm and obedient, confident and social	
	Regular, attentive, no truancy	21. Students have become comparatively punctual and attentive	
	Lesson , chapter, practice, class work, homework, class test	22. Students re-cover the same topic repeatedly through different activities	
	Lesson, topic, question, practice, better learning, memorize	23. Repeated practice makes memorization easy	
	Assignment, good score, good handwriting, practice, improved	24. Students' handwriting has been improved	
	Assignment , drawing, good handwriting, group presentation , competition, high score, encouraging	25. Creativity is being developed	
	Regular practice, bold, aloud, voice, style, free, eye contact, pronunciation, presentation skills	26. Now students can do presentation well and can communicate better than before	
	Group leader, leadership , respectful, considerate, co-operation	27. Students have developed leadership skill	
	Peer teaching , help, discussion	28. Students co-operate each other	

Participatory classroom, weakness, clear concept, feeling free, no hesitation, group discussion, solving problems	29. Slow and advanced learners can share ideas during sessions
Tick or cross, no marks, inactive	29. Inactive students do not get marks
Absent, poor score, notice, guardian	30. Teachers do not give a good score to irregularly attending students
Monitoring, class test, listening, questioning, observe	31. Teachers give SBA marks based on students' activity
Lecture method, boring, participating, learning , interesting	32. Participatory sessions are not monotonous
Poster paper, drawing, coloring, good handwriting, clearly	33. Presentation sessions are colorful and attractive
30% marks, all subjects	34. SBA mark reduces the anxiety of annual exam
Regular class test, regular class work, regular preparedness, less study load	35. Students are always preparing for the exam
Presentation, assignment, discussion, gathering points, synthesis, problem solving, leadership, exploring information	36. SBA is creating interest in different activities
Curious, inquisitive, creative, leadership, oratorical skill	37. Students can discover their potential through SBA
Scientist, reporter, editor, researcher, teacher	38. Realization of potential and interest helps inform career planning

Appendix-5

Figure 4: The procedure of data analysis for theme four

	Key words	Concepts	Theme four
Research questions one and two: What does SBA look like in the secondary classroom and what are the students' views on SBA?	Class size, 100+ students, one class teacher, one classroom, 30/40 students in each classroom, better monitoring and syllabus	39. Classrooms are overpopulated, so more classrooms and more teachers are required	Factors hindering the implementation of SBA
	30 minutes, 100+ students, lesson, syllabus, 60 minutes, participatory sessions, complete lesson presentation	40. Class duration is not long enough for participatory methods	
	Insufficient materials, equipment, more science materials, teaching aids, learning aids, electric cell, apparatus	41. Schools do not have enough teaching / learning aids	

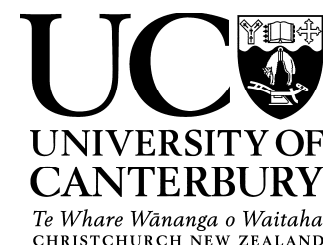
Appendix-6

Information letter for the principal of school

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

My name is Nazma Purvin. I am studying towards a Master of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury in New Zealand. I also work as a lecturer in a government teachers' training college in Bangladesh. Currently, I am doing a thesis as a part of my degree. The topic of the thesis is, “How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

The aim of the study is to learn about students' views and experiences of SBA. I would like to ask permission therefore to do three observations in the class VII classroom of your school and to interview 3 students from that class. If you grant me to access your school I would ask you to nominate a class VII teacher whose class I could observe. I would then invite the teacher to participate in the project and if she or he agrees, ask him or her to nominate students for the interview part of the project. If your school has policy on or guidelines about SBA I would also like to review these and may seek assistance from you in collecting relevant documents.

The observations will be conducted prior to the interviews. They will be of approximately 30-45 minutes duration. The interviews would need to take place at school and would also take 30-45 minutes. All the interviews will be audio-recorded. These and the observations would need to take place during the period October-November, 2010. I would negotiate specific times with you, the class teacher and the students concerned.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do allow me to conduct this study at your school, you should know that participants have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without penalty. If any participant withdraws, I will do my best to remove any information relating to that participant, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure the anonymity of the participants and the school in publications of the findings. All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

Please note that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences. All participants will receive a report on the findings of this study.

I am undertaking this research as a part of my study; in this case, my position as a teacher educator under the Ministry will not play any role and will not affect the study any way.

My research is being supervised by Dr Alex Gunn (alex.gunn@canterbury.ac.nz) and Murray Fastier (murray.fastier@canterbury.ac.nz) at the University of Canterbury. Either I or my supervisors can be contacted if you have any queries about the study and its implementation in your school.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.

If you agree that I may conduct the study in your school, I would appreciate it if you would **return the completed consent form** to me in the envelope provided by **Day/Month/2010**. I am looking forward to working in your school and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Yours sincerely

Nazma Purvin
House No. B/5
Officers' Quarters
Bogra Cantonment
Bangladesh.
Email :npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Appendix-7

Information sheet for the class teacher of Class VII

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

My name is Nazma Purvin. I am studying towards a Master of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury in New Zealand. I also work as a lecturer in a government teachers' training college in Bangladesh. Currently, I am doing a thesis as a part of my degree. The topic of the thesis is, “How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

The aim of the study is to learn about students' views and experiences of SBA. Therefore, I have asked permission of the principal to do three observations in the class VII classroom of your school and to interview 3 students from the class. The principal has consented and nominated your class to be observed. Thus, I would like to ask that you allow me to observe your class. I would also ask you to nominate students for the interview part of the project.

The observations will be conducted prior to the interviews. They will be of approximately 30-45 minutes duration. The interviews would need to take place at school and would also take 30-45 minutes. All the interviews will be audio-recorded. These and the observations would need to take place during the period October-November, 2010. I would negotiate specific times with you, the principal and the students concerned.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do allow me to conduct this study at your class, you should know that you have the right to decline to allow me to observe your class and you may withdraw from the study at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without penalty. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to your class, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure the anonymity of you, the students and the school in publications of the findings. All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

Please note that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences. You will receive a report on the findings of this study.

I am undertaking this research as a part of my study; in this case, my position as a teacher educator under the Ministry will not play any role and will not affect the study any way.

My research is being supervised by Dr Alex Gunn (alex.gunn@canterbury.ac.nz) and Murray Fastier (murray.fastier@canterbury.ac.nz) at the University of Canterbury. Either I or my supervisors can be contacted if you have any queries about the study and its implementation in your school.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.

If you agree that I may conduct the study in your class, I would appreciate it if you would **return the completed consent form** to me in the envelope provided by **Day/Month/2010**. I am looking forward to working in your class and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Yours sincerely

Nazma Purvin
House No. B/5
Officers' Quarters
Bogra Cantonment
Bangladesh.
Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

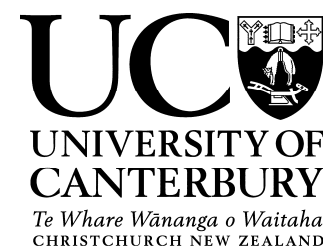
Appendix-8

Information sheet for the guardian

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

My name is Nazma Purvin. I am studying towards a Master of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury in New Zealand. I also work as a lecturer in a government teachers' training college in Bangladesh. Currently, I am doing a thesis as a part of my degree. The topic of the thesis is, “How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

The aim of the study is to learn about students' views and experiences of SBA. Therefore, I have asked the principal of your child's school to allow me to access the school to do three observations in the class VII classroom and to interview 3 students from the class. The class teacher of class VII has nominated your child as an interviewee of my study. Thus, I would like to request that you allow your child to participate in this study and allow me to interview him/her.

The observations will be conducted prior to the interviews. They will be of approximately 30-45 minutes duration. The interviews would need to take place at school and would also take 30-45 minutes. All the interviews will be audio-recorded. These and the observations would need to take place during the period October-November, 2010. I would negotiate specific times with your child, the class teacher and the principal of the school.

Please note that your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you do allow your child to participate in this study, you should know that participants have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without penalty. If your child withdraws, I will do my best to remove any information relating to him/her, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure the anonymity of your child and the school in publications of the findings. All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

Please note that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences. Your child will receive a report on the findings of this study.

I am undertaking this research as a part of my study; in this case, my position as a teacher educator under the Ministry will not play any role and will not affect the study any way.

My research is being supervised by Dr Alex Gunn (alex.gunn@canterbury.ac.nz) and Murray Fastier (murray.fastier@canterbury.ac.nz) at the University of Canterbury. Either I or my supervisors can be contacted if you have any queries about the study and its implementation in your school.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.

If you agree that I may interview your child for the study, I would appreciate it if you would **return the completed consent form** to your child's class teacher in the envelope provided by Day/Month/2010. I am looking forward to working with your child and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Yours sincerely

Nazma Purvin
House No. B/5
Officers' Quarters
Bogra Cantonment
Bangladesh.
Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Appendix-9

Information letter for students

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

My name is Nazma Purvin. I am studying towards a Master of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury in New Zealand. I also work as a lecturer in a government teachers' training college in Bangladesh. Currently, I am doing a thesis as a part of my degree. In my research I want to find out how do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA). I would like you to participate in the study.

Your school principal and class teacher have agreed to the study and I will also ask for your guardian's permission for you to participate. If you agree, I would like you to be involved in an interview at school where I will ask you about SBA. Two others from your class will also be interviewed and I will also do some observations in your class (class VII).

The interviews will take 30-45 minutes. These will be audio-recorded and I would negotiate a specific time with you, the class teacher and the principal.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do allow me to interview you, you have the right to not to answer all of my questions and you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure what you say in the interview stays confidential and I will also make sure that no one can identify you, your class teacher or your school when I write reports on the study. I will keep all information about the study secure for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

I may write papers from the study and that will be published or presented. I will provide you with a report of the study's findings.

My research is being supervised by Dr Alex Gunn (alex.gunn@canterbury.ac.nz) and Murray Fastier (murray.fastier@canterbury.ac.nz) at the University of Canterbury. If you want to ask questions about the study you can contact me or either of them or your class teacher or parent about it. If something goes wrong for you

in the study and you want to complain, you can also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.

If your guardian allows you to participate and you also agree, I would appreciate it if you would **return the completed consent form** to your class teacher in the envelope provided by Day/Month/2010. I am looking forward to working with you and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Yours sincerely

Nazma Purvin, House No. B/5, Officers' Quarters, Bogra Cantonment, Bangladesh.

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz.

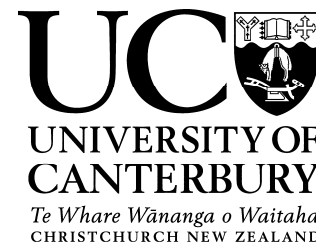
Appendix-10

Consent form for the principal of school

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email: npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based a:

Declaration of Consent to Participate - School Principal

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. I understand what will be required of me if I allow the research to be conducted in my school.

I understand that I give consent voluntarily for this study to be undertaken in my school and that I may withdraw consent at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without any penalty.

I understand that any of my school's teachers and students who agree to participate in the study do so voluntarily and that they may withdraw at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without any penalty.

I understand that the researcher will undertake observations in the school and that interviews with our students will be audio-recorded.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that any information or opinions provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and any published or reported results will not identify the students, teachers or the institution.

I understand that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences.

I understand that participation in this study will not cause any kind of harm to the students and teachers and will not disturb their privacy.

I understand that the participant students and teachers will receive reports on the findings of this study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Nazma or either of her supervisors, and any complaints about the study can be directed to the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to allow the researcher to invite the teacher and students to participate in this research project.

Name

Institution:

Date:

Signature:

Email address for report on study:

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by Day/Month/2010***

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix-11

Consent form for the class teachers of Class VII

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010



“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

Declaration of Consent to Participate - Class teacher

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. I understand what will be required of me if I allow the researcher to observe my class.

I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without any penalty.

I understand that the researcher will undertake observations in my class room and interview three of the students whom I need to nominate. The interviews with our students will be audio-recorded.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that any information or opinions provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and any published or reported results will not identify me, the students or our school.

I understand that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences.

I understand that participation in this study will not cause any kind of harm to me and the students and will not disturb my privacy.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Nazma or either of her supervisors, and any complaints about the study can be directed to the Co-Chairs of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to allow the researcher to do observations and interview the students of my class to collect data for this research project.

Name

Institution:

Date:

Signature:

Email address for report on study:

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by Day/Month/2010***

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix-12



Consent form for guardian

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email : npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: Day/Month/2010

“How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?”

Declaration of Consent to Participate - Guardian

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. I understand what will be required of my child if I allow him/her to participate in the research to be conducted in his/her school.

I understand that I give consent voluntarily for my son/daughter to participate in this study and that I may withdraw consent at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without any penalty.

I understand my child's participation in the study is voluntary and he/she may withdraw at any time prior to the cessation of data collection without any penalty.

I understand that the researcher will undertake observations in my child's class room and interview my child. The interview with my child will be audio-recorded.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the

University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that any information or opinions provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and any published or reported results will not identify my child, his/her teachers or his/her institution.

I understand that the results of this research may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at educational conferences.

I understand that participation in this study will not cause any kind of harm to my child and will not disturb our privacy.

I understand that my son/daughter will receive a report on the findings of this study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Nazma or either of her supervisors, and any complaints about the study can be directed to the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to allow my child to participate in this research project.

Name:

Guardian of
(name of the
student of
class VII)

Institution:

Date:

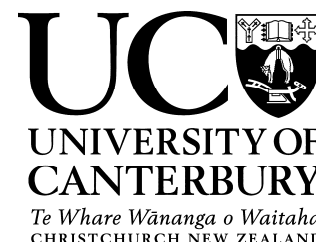
Signature:

*Please **return this completed consent form to the class teacher** in the envelope provided*

by Day/Month/2010

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix-13



Consent form for the students

Telephone No. 643 ### ##

Email (Researcher's email):

npu15@uclive.ac.nz

Date: 5/09/2010

"How do secondary students in Bangladesh make sense of school based assessment (SBA)?"

Declaration of Consent to Participate - Student

I have read and understand the information provided about this research project.

I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I participate in this project.

I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

I have read the information letter and understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher.

I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

I understand that neither I, nor my school, will be identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may choose to withdraw at anytime.

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I have written my email address below for the report to be sent to.

I understand that I can get more information about this project from the researcher, and that I can contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, if I have complaints about the research.

I agree to participate in this research and my parents have also given consent on their consent form.

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair,

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Telephone: (03) 345 8312.

Full name (student) _____

Class _____

Class Teacher _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Email address for report _____

Please return this consent form in the sealed envelope to your class teacher by 20/09/2010.

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

